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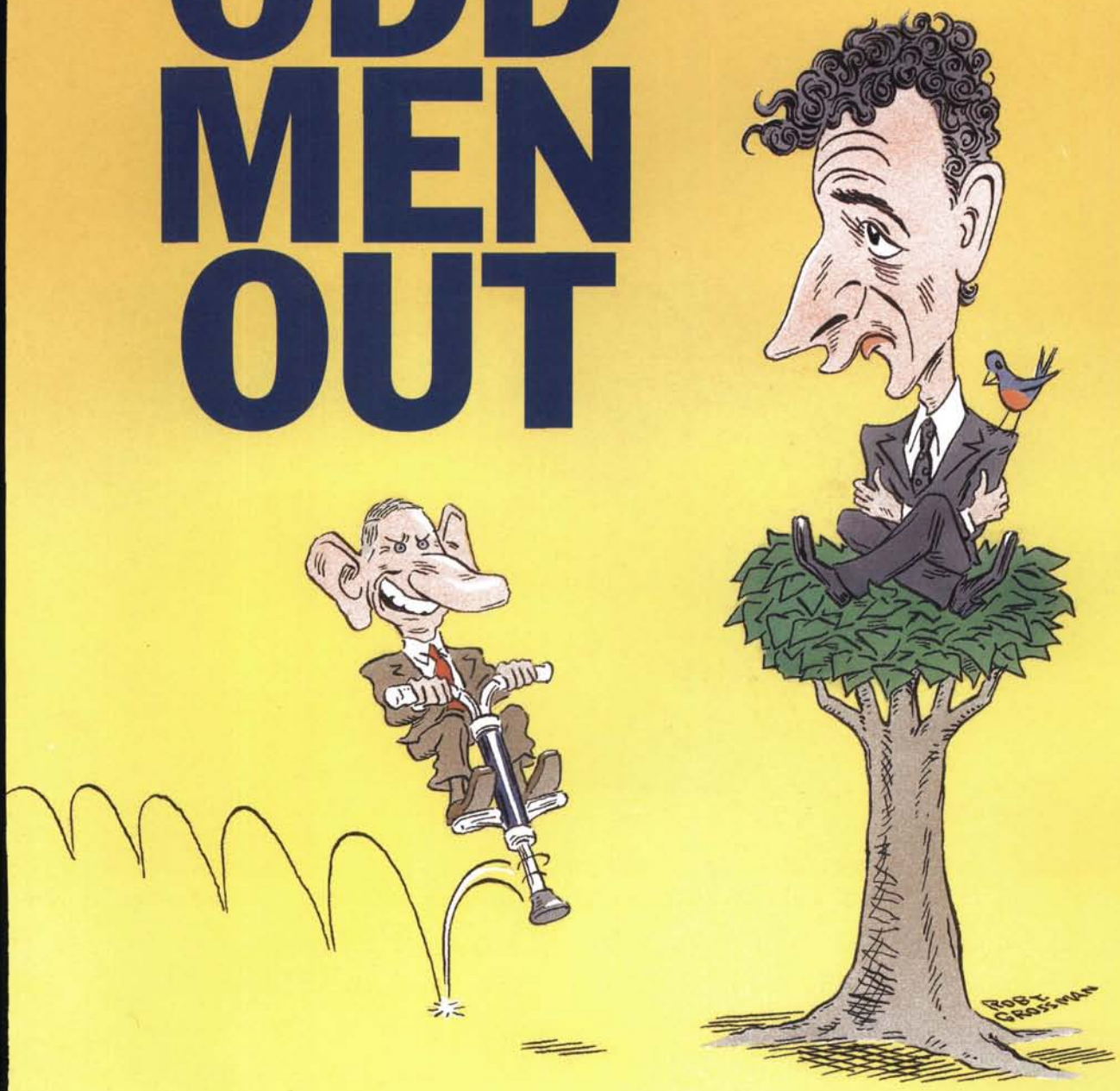

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4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Throwing dirt at Harvard, what's at Apple's core &c.

6 **CHARLES LANE** TRB: RE-ORIENT The end of trade-obsessed Japan policy.

7 **THE EDITORS** WHAT IS BOSNIA? What the Bosnians owe themselves, and us.

8 **NOTEBOOK** Dole and Clinton vs. sensible energy policy, the GOP vs. guns &c.

10 **MATTHEW COOPER** LIBERALS FOR A DAY When the personal becomes political.

11 **MARK FRANKEL** CANDID CAMERA Corporations that spy on their workers.

12 **ROBERT LAMMÉ** NORTH CAROLINA POSTCARD: EYES ON THE PRIZE Liberals love Harvey Gantt, and with good reason. But can he beat Jesse Helms?

16 **GERSHOM GORENBERG** WEST BANK POSTCARD: THE BURBS Israel's mellow settlers.

18 **MICHAEL LEWIS** CAMPAIGN JOURNAL: THE NORMAL PERSON OF TOMORROW Ralph Nader takes his juiced-up vision of citizenship on the trail.

22 **JOHN B. JUDIS** THE THIRD RAIL Ross Perot thinks his Reform Party will remake American politics. More likely, it'll just confuse them further.

26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: STRIVING AND CONTRIVING Sharon Stone triumphs in *Last Dance*; Catherine Deneuve can't save *Ma Saison Préférée*.

28 **ROBERT BRUSTEIN** ON THEATER: RESIDENT THEATER HOPES *The Tempest*, *Venus* and *Dance of Death* suggest a brilliant renaissance in American theater.

30 **BERNARD KNOX** INFRA DIG *Schliemann of Troy* by David A. Traill and *The Discovery of the Greek Bronze Age* by J. Lesley Fitton

35 **SEAN WILENTZ** FLIRTING WITH DISASTER *Blood Sport* by James B. Stewart

38 **BRIAN SWANN** POEM *The Wind and the Rain*

39 **STANISLAW BARANCZAK** SPIN, MEMORY *Highcastle* by Stanislaw Lem

42 **JENNIFER BRADLEY** WASHINGTON DIARIST: THE BEAUTY MYTH

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CORRESPONDENCE

Coarse work

To the editors:

Jeffrey Rosen's treatment of the Texas law school case ("The Day the Quotas Died," April 22), in which he throws about such adjectives as "freewheeling" and "coarse" in attempting to discredit the legal reasoning of Judge J.E. Smith of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, is not, one sees, without a certain coarseness of its own.

Take, for instance, Rosen's contention that extending the color-blind principle to university admissions nationwide would "precipitate resegregation on a national scale." There's nothing coarse about the proposition. It's a purely empirical question. Either color-blind admissions would cut down on the number of African Americans admitted to colleges and universities or it wouldn't. But to talk about this as "resegregation," with its overtones of Southern segregation before the Civil Rights Act, seems to me to come very close to outright demagoguery.

Consider a now-standard example. Playing in the National Basketball Association is something millions of young Americans aspire to. It's fabulously well-paid and makes you an object of respect among a huge portion of the American public. Yet whites are tremendously underrepresented in the NBA. Members of certain groups (Jews, Chicanos) are underrepresented to the point of virtual nonexistence. Yet nobody is tempted to talk about this underrepresentation as a form of de facto "segregation," nor does anyone ever suggest that there is some hidden policy of discrimination against Jews or Chicanos. And the reason we don't talk this way is that we assume, quite correctly, that players make the NBA on a color-blind (religion-blind, ethnicity-blind) basis: it's something an awful lot of talented people want to do, there are very few slots, and the slots go to the most gifted candidates.

Rosen's purely emotional attachment to a certain kind of social engineering has led him, this time at least, to reason badly not just "in general" but as a lawyer. The version of *Bakke* that is legally defensible is this: two candidates, both with 720 SAT verbal scores and 690 math, both with superb records of extracurricular accomplishment (music, drama, chess), apply to Harvard. There is one slot left. One of the candidates is white. The other is African American. In this one instance, accepting the African American candidate in the name of "diversity" seems to me both justifiable and, on the reasoning of Justice Powell in the *Bakke* case, constitutionally sustainable. Anything else isn't "diversity" at all: it's just good old-fashioned discrimination, and the time has come to put it permanently out of business.

WILLIAM C. DOWLING
Princeton, New Jersey

To the editors:

In "The Day the Quotas Died," Jeffrey Rosen claims: "The Supreme Court will only uphold federal racial set-asides in light of convincing evidence of past discrimination by the federal government itself." Not true. In *City of Richmond* v. *Croson*, the Supreme Court squarely held that government "can use its spending powers to remedy private discrimination." While Rosen might be right that "the federal government has been discriminating in favor of minority contractors rather than against them," he cannot plausibly claim that private discrimination is a thing of the past. The government still must prove private discrimination in particular markets (and demonstrate that racial preferences are narrowly tailored to remedy this discrimination). But Rosen seriously overstates the government's burden by claiming that government may not legitimately remedy private discrimination.

IAN AYRES
New Haven, Connecticut

League of their own

To the editors:

In your "Notebook" of April 22, you criticize the Catholic League for issuing an annual report on anti-Catholicism. You cite our complaints against recent college productions of the movies *Agnes of God* and *The Last Temptation of Christ*, as well as the 1995 release of *Priest*, as indicative of our "paranoia."

That would suggest that Michael Medved (who is not Catholic) is also paranoid for branding *Agnes of God* as anti-Catholic. It would suggest that Blockbuster is paranoid for refusing to stock *The Last Temptation of Christ*. And it would suggest that scores of organizations and movie critics are also paranoid for labeling *Priest* as anti-Catholic. With regard to the last film, your charge also makes inexplicable the explicit statements of anti-Catholicism that both the writer and the director of *Priest* have made.

The Catholic League does not complain about every *Sister Act*-type movie that is made. But if THE NEW REPUBLIC can't distinguish between that movie and the films we complained about, then that indicates a tolerance for intolerance that the Catholic League is proud to fight against.

WILLIAM A. DONOHUE
President, Catholic League
New York, New York

Dirty pool

To the editors:

As someone who attended the recent Harvard graduate student conference on "Dirt," I take issue with James Wood's dour account of it ("Down and Dirty," April 22). Reading his essay, one would never guess that three of the papers were on Old or Middle English texts, that Shakespeare, Donne, Dickens, Emily Brontë and a host of contemporary authors were discussed or that the conference, advertised as "interdisciplinary," was a superb example of new and fascinating work in "cultural studies." While Wood would clearly like to maintain rigid boundaries between history and literature, "contemplation" and "use," cultural studies is precisely a way of reflecting on the contextual, the daily and the devalued with the critical and analytical tools derived from literary studies and other disciplines.

As Wood correctly points out, theorists from Freud to Derrida have taught us to take a second look at the discarded, the symptomatic and the marginalized. Energies of differentiation, like the differentiation between the valued and the unvalued, can be studied in both directions. What an author, or a culture, discards can be full of information. One has to be truly unimaginative (or perhaps threatened) to go to so much trouble to belittle the work of sophisticated young scholars, particularly women, discussing topics Pater would have omitted. Indeed, Wood descends to the journalistic equivalent of "fighting dirty," attacking younger people by name through distorted descriptions of their physical characteristics.

Flaubert understood that novel-reading by adolescent girls was a topic worthy of investigation; Joyce tried his hand at describing female orgasm; Kafka depicted the world from an insect's point of view; but Wood, apparently, considers these topics unworthy of serious analysis. Or perhaps he simply cannot bear to see women take charge of them.

Literature, in fact, does not thrive on the "tact of omission," but on constantly pushing the boundaries of what can be represented. And the same is true of literary and cultural studies.

BARBARA E. JOHNSON
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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To the editors:

James Wood's "Cambridge Postcard" represents not only the latest, but the lowest, instance of THE NEW REPUBLIC's lamentable decline into sexist, homophobic and disengaged "journalism." I am quite happy to admit to being one of the student organizers of the "Dirt" conference at Harvard University, and I am equally pleased to report that in bashing the conference, the magazine only lived up to what has become its reputation: predictable grouchy old-man tirades, minus the wit of a Mike Royko or occasional sense of a Mike Barnicle.

That James Wood disagrees with us and with many other academics about the value of studying nontraditional or noncanonical subjects is a matter of prerogative. No matter what he perceived as the common mentality of the conference and its participants, I would be the last to insist upon the immunity of any field of study to critique and questioning. I would briefly point out that many of the subjects to which he objected—pornography, juvenile literature, general commodities—represent both acceptable and even crucial topics of analysis in other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, history or anthropology. What I do object to is the condescending patronage of Mr. Wood's "reportage." Two female students who didn't even crack a smile during the reading of their paper are dismissed as "giggly and squirming." A gay student is transparently referred to as a "young man with a thin voice"; presumably this winking code is adopted because, if his homosexuality had been overtly stated ("A young gay man welcomed us"), it would have been obvious that there was no reason to mention it other than its supposed wrongness.

Meanwhile, TNR has published Camille Paglia raving endlessly (what do your editors do?) about Barbra Streisand's nose and Douglas Coupland coldly musing about America's cultural quirkiness. And we're wrong/faddish/unintellectual to talk about popular fiction?

MARIA C. SANCHEZ
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Draft dodging

To the editors:

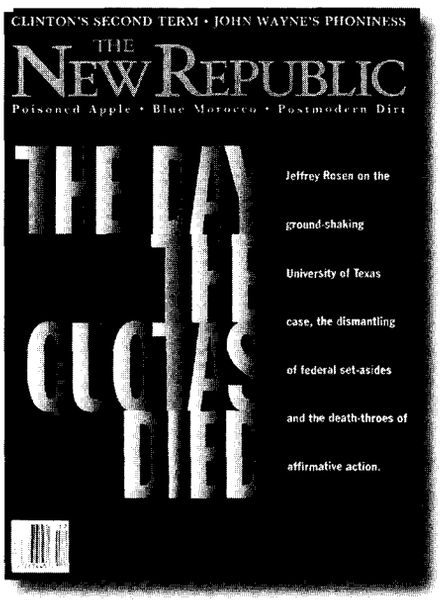
I write to express my disappointment with your "Notebook" item titled "Hoop Schemes" (April 22) concerning Syracuse University student John Wallace's decision to remain in college for his senior year, rather than entering the NBA draft. While it may be true that Wallace has "made himself more attractive to pro teams" by playing in his senior season, if he had "gone pro" last year he would certainly be a millionaire today. The wherewithal to turn down a certain fortune in favor of the possibility of even greater riches in the future demonstrates a maturity that even a final year in college would not produce in others and demonstrates an economic savvy not likely to be taught even in a senior-level economics course.

PETER A. GIUSTI
Savannah, Georgia

Baked Apples

To the editors:

"Poisoned Apple" by Randall Stross (April 22) is an interesting piece, but Stross flagrantly and gratuitously misrep-



resents my views. Apple has been poorly run; I agree completely. So does every other North American adult human—the story has been flogged endlessly on business and technology pages ever since the company started to go wrong. But it's an interesting story regardless, no question.

Stross goes on to quote my *New York Times* piece praising the elegance of the Apple Macintosh and remarks by way of shooting me down that Apple has had plenty of time to put its bad business practices right. But when I claimed that the Macintosh was more elegant than any of its competitors, I didn't mean to assert that Apple had been well-managed or that the Macintosh was better in every conceivable way than the competition. I meant that the Macintosh was more elegant than any of its competitors. Sorry for the tricky logic, but writers are like that.

Stross's failure to grasp the meaning and consequences of elegance is a more fundamental problem. Microsoft, he points out, has been wildly successful with Windows 3.0 and its successors. He doesn't point out (but everyone knows anyway) that the whole point of Windows 3.0 was to make PCs behave like Macintoshes. If elegance didn't matter to consumers, Microsoft could have saved itself a lot of work and not bothered with Windows 3.0. But of course elegance did matter. I can't figure out how anyone could miss so basic a point unless he were actively trying to.

DAVID GELERNTER
New Haven, Connecticut

To the editors:

Randall Stross attributes Microsoft's success to founder Bill Gates's strategy of licensing MS-DOS and Windows to every PC vendor who asked. In fact, Gates's real coup was not indiscriminately licensing his operating system—a move that resulted in a nightmarish Babel of conflicting standards and incompatibilities in the PC market, not to mention a several-year anti-trust investigation—but convincing Joe Consumer, through flim-flam and trickery worthy of P.T. Barnum, that Windows and the Macintosh OS are equivalent.

On the contrary: a half-dozen independent human factors studies widely available on the Internet demonstrate that the Mac is a superior system—easier to set up, easier to use and ultimately more productive. Even the editors of popular Windows-centric magazines such as *PC World* and *Byte* admit the fact. Stross's analogy between the Mac and the Beta videotape format, whose "technical superiority was never that clear-cut," is therefore a spurious one.

Why, then, does Stross shrug off Macintosh fans' claims of superiority for their system as merely the pie-in-the-sky rants of a few Birkenstocked weirdos? And why does he treat so snidely Steve Jobs's idealistic approach to the PC industry? What exactly is wrong with a company having goals beyond the bottom line? Stross's smug hindsight and ad hominem attacks on Macintosh users are all too typical of Microsoft apologists.

ALEXANDER CHAMBERLAIN
Portland, Oregon

Don't be cruell

To the editors:

Folks, if you're going to base a whole issue on a quote from T.S. Eliot, at least get the quote right.... Eliot wrote, "April is the cruellest month"—not "April is the cruelest month."

BERNARD B. BEARD
Boston, Massachusetts

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FROM WASHINGTON

Re-Orient

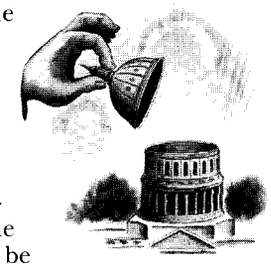
The highlight of President Clinton's recent foray into Northeast Asia—besides his polishing off a state dinner with no embarrassing attack of indigestion—was the announcement of a new American-Japanese mutual security agreement in Tokyo. The changes it makes might seem incremental, but they are not trivial. The U.S. is redeploying forces from some of their unpopular bases on Okinawa without reducing overall troop strength; in return, Japan has agreed to pay more for their upkeep. More important, the Japanese will for the first time study the idea of lending concrete support to a U.S. war effort should a crisis arise in the region. "Studying" the possibility may sound pedestrian to Americans, but, in the context of Japan's pacifist postwar constitution, it is pretty novel.

No sooner had the document been signed, however, than America's Japanophobic trade hawks began dismissing the pact as, at best, an election-year publicity stunt and, at worst, proof that Clinton has finally surrendered in the long twilight economic struggle with Japan, Inc. "The changes proposed in the security relationship barely deserve the label 'cosmetic,'" huffed Ted Galen Carpenter of the isolationist Cato Institute. The Japanese have so thoroughly outfoxed the U.S. in trade talks, the argument goes, that the president decided to manufacture some good news about security issues.

When it comes to Bill Clinton's foreign policy, it never pays to underestimate campaign considerations. In this instance, though, I think there's more to the story. After all, if the president was mainly interested in scoring points with the voters back home, he would have staged a noisy standoff with Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto over Japanese protectionism. Bob Dole promptly took him to task because he didn't.

Clinton's decision to modernize U.S.-Japanese security arrangements, albeit modestly, is probably just what he claims it is: the product of a months-long policy review within his administration, and of a dialogue with the Japanese, in which both sides have decided that their long-term interest in a stabilizing U.S. presence in Northeast Asia outweighs their undeniable economic and cultural differences.

To the America-out-of-Asia-now crowd, the U.S. troop presence in South Korea and Japan is just an expensive police force for Japan's mercantilist co-prosperity sphere; it serves no U.S. interest in the post-cold war world. Clinton's early talk about how economics were becoming as important to U.S. security as military strength and political alliances encouraged their hope that we might finally leave the Japanese to their own devices. But, in the past three years, two relatively poor but militarily restless Asian states—China and North Korea—have threatened the Pacific Rim, prompting Clinton to tilt from the Commerce Department's trade-centered view of Japan toward the Pentagon's more traditional politico-military conception. Now it appears that the U.S. troop presence is to be extended indefinitely.



History will probably record this as one of the more farsighted decisions of Clinton's presidency. The self-styled "realism" of "nationalistic" American approaches to Asia is, in fact, myopic and unrealistic. Clinton is not only accommodating U.S. policy to the reality of a possible North Korean or Chinese threat to peace, he is also responding to the reality, recently documented for him by White House aides, that the economic relationship between this country and Japan is no longer that of doormat to juggernaut (if it ever was). Asian capitalism, it turns out, is not some sort of economic perpetual motion machine. It is subject to the same long-term market and demographic forces that eventually moderated the growth potential of other mature industrial economies.

Indeed, U.S. growth has outpaced Japan's for the last four years. As Japan's once-vaunted banks collapse under the weight of their own investments in overpriced real estate—remember how scared we were when they bought Rockefeller Center?—American manufacturers seize the lead in semiconductors. Ford has just bought control of Mazda, a potentially revolutionary development which augurs greater American penetration of Japan's hermetically sealed car market. The U.S. trade deficit with Japan is still high, thanks largely to consumer demand for Japanese imports created by strong American growth, but American exports to Japan are also rising.

Of course Japan is still too protectionist. And of course the U.S. government should do what it can to pry open Japanese markets. But market-oriented policies—such as U.S. toleration of a rising yen—dissolve trade barriers more efficiently, in the long run, than government-to-government jawboning. Japan's recent economic stumbling shows it is *passé* to base U.S. relations with Tokyo on the notion that the two countries are locked in a zero-sum battle for economic supremacy, which America is fated to lose unless it imitates Japan's *dirigisme*. The trade imbalance would largely disappear if both countries enacted internal economic reforms: greater spurs to consumption in Japan, a smaller budget deficit and more incentives for savings and capital formation in the U.S. For all these reasons, the U.S.-Japan security relationship can, and should, be dealt with separately from the U.S.-Japan trade relationship.

While the Cold War may be over in Northeast Asia, a cold war, or wars, lingers on. This struggle consists of crosscutting contests among China, Taiwan, Japan and North and South Korea. None of these actors trusts each other very much; none, therefore, can quite decide with whom to align itself. These countries could seek a balance of power on their own, but, given their vast differences in size, wealth and technological advancement, the likely result of any such effort would be a destabilizing scramble for power and armaments. Only the United States, an outsider, is capable of checking the hegemonic ambitions of the region's powers, while acting as something of an honest broker among them. And, in the case of Japan, checking hegemonic ambitions is best done by nurturing a friendship with America in which Japan gradually—*very* gradually, its neighbors hope—assumes more and more responsibility for policing the region militarily.

The last time Northeast Asia's regional rivalries were allowed to run their course the U.S. got sucked into a bloody Pacific war that lasted almost four years and set back the economic progress of half of humanity by a generation. Given this history, I've never quite understood why some Americans seem so eager for a return to conflictual relations with Japan. The purportedly expensive and unnecessary investment we are making now in an Asian military presence looks mighty cheap when you consider the alternative.

CHARLES LANE

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MAY 20, 1996

WHAT IS BOSNIA?

Mass expulsion, mass rape, mass murder: before such depredations the distinctions between political systems melt away. Evil must be resisted in any political setting in which it appears. In Bosnia, however, evil appeared in a relatively unfamiliar setting. There genocide was visited upon pluralism. The Bosnian fight against the Serbian dream of ethnic purity was not made in the name of a Bosnian dream of ethnic purity. The Bosnian war was not a war of a homogeneity against a homogeneity. It was a war of a homogeneity against a heterogeneity. Sarajevo became the world capital of the latter, where the principle of in-the-many, the-one made its stand.

In the years of its perdition, Bosnia did not have many friends in the United States; but what friendship it did find here, it owed to the fact that it was being punished for a philosophy, and a social reality, in which the United States professes to believe. At this magazine, certainly, we were not "pro-Bosnian" because we prefer one Balkan tribe to another Balkan tribe. "Pro-Bosnian" was shorthand for "pro-tolerance" (and, of course, for "anti-genocide"). In the ethnic impurity of Sarajevo we saw a democratic dispensation, and we wished to help.

But genocide does not leave its survivors with a liberal heart. Bosnia is still teaching lessons, and its latest one is this: attack a people as a tribe and a people will become a tribe. And who can entirely blame them? They have been hardened, so they are hard. Their friends called the Muslims Bosnians. Their enemies called the Bosnians Muslims. More and more, they seem to be choosing the appellation of their enemies over the appellation of their friends. We seem to be witnessing, under Alija Izetbegovic's government, an official redefinition of Bosnians as Muslims, a repudiation of multiethnicity in favor of monoethnicity.

It was only the Western friends of Bosnia, of course, who called the Muslims Bosnians. Their Eastern friends, who were more reliable, called the Bosnians Muslims, and assisted them for that reason. Foremost among them was Iran. While the West cruelly and hypocritically maintained an arms embargo against Bosnia, Iran furnished the besieged state with thousands of tons of military equipment and hundreds of military and intelligence personnel. At the height of the war, there were about 1,000 Iranians in Bosnia. Now only about 200 remain, though their presence in Bosnia represents a Bosnian violation of the Dayton accord.

This is not a military problem. The military balance in the Balkans will not be altered by a few hundred mujahedin. Izetbegovic's refusal to fulfill this provision of the Dayton accord reflects a political problem, which is a general thickening of Bosnian-Iranian relations. In January, just a few days before they were supposed to leave the country, Iranians helped Izetbegovic to establish, in defiance of Dayton, the Agency for Investigation and Documentation, an exclusively Muslim security force that is independent of the Interior Ministry and answers only to the president and his Party of Democratic Action. In February, NATO soldiers discovered an Iranian-run training center for terrorism in Bosnia and arrested three men from the Iranian Ministry of Interior. In March, the prime minister of Bosnia traveled to Tehran and thanked Iran for helping Bosnia "at a time when its Islamic identity was jeopardized." In April, Iran opened a lavish embassy and cultural center in Sarajevo, and it was revealed that the Agency for Investigation and Documentation has been dispatching commando units to capture or to kill people whom it has designated as war criminals.

The relationship with Iran is itself only a part of the process of Islamicization over which Izetbegovic is presiding. The officer corps of the Bosnian army has been purged of its non-Muslims. The Party of Democratic Action has taken over state radio and television, where its censors are busy, and it appears to have had a hand in the destruction of the independent radio station in Sarajevo. The Bosnian minister of culture has attacked the Academy of Arts and Sciences for its non-Muslim membership, and chillingly observed (according to *Oslobodjenje*, the valiant Sarajevan daily) that "'multiculturalism' that kills Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bosnians is not welcome in the scientific community."

It was not for *this* that American soldiers were sent to Bosnia. The Balkan genocide was not ended by Iran, it was ended by the United States; and the United States cannot be expected to watch idly as Iranian foreign policy flourishes in southern Europe. We supported a struggle for democracy, not a struggle for ethnocracy. The Serbs failed to destroy the Bosnians. Did they fail to destroy Bosnia? Only the Bosnian government can answer that question. We need its answer. •

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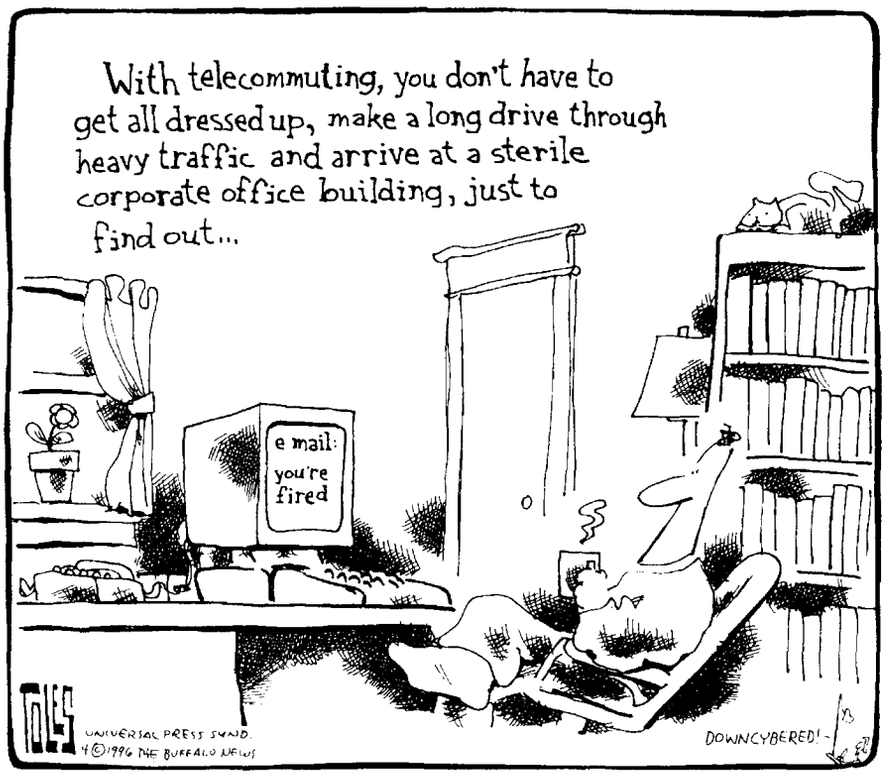
NOTEBOOK

CAPITOLS VS. BULLETS: It's no secret that this Congress, elected with more than a little help from the NRA, takes a dim view of gun control laws. Newt promised the gun owners a repeal of the assault weapons ban passed last year, and in March the House delivered just such a vote. Not so well-known is the fact that while the GOP leadership has revamped just about every aspect of daily life in Congress—from replacing elevator operators to restricting free-roaming lobbyists—it has made no effort to repeal the long-standing ban on firearms in and around the Capitol, where anyone carrying a gun is guilty of a felony. It's not as if Newt and Co. believe that weapons bans make law-abiding people safer. In a 1994 "Crossfire" interview, when Michael Kinsley asked now House Majority Whip Tom DeLay, "You honestly believe the country is safer the more people own semi-automatic weapons?" DeLay didn't miss a beat. "Absolutely," he replied. So why not ditch all those metal detectors in the Rayburn Building? They're just for wimps, right? It's high time our nation's public servants had the chance to exercise the same Second Amendment rights as the people they serve.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DOWNCYBERED!

BUMMER: *The Atlantic Monthly* has long taken seriousness to the edge of gloom. This year, though, gloom seems to be verging on panic. Three months ago the cover displayed an American flag splitting apart under the headline, "THE SOURCE OF OUR DISCONTENT." Next month's headline? "DRIFTING TOWARD DISASTER: HOW THE CONGRESSIONAL ATTACK ON ENERGY RESEARCH IS THREATENING THE ECONOMY, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND NATIONAL SECURITY." This month you can forget about Disaster, because we're facing something even worse: "Unless we act now," the cover warns, "the aging of America will become an economic problem that dwarfs all other national issues." Granted, after the Tokyo subway attack our cover told readers to "BE AFRAID, BE VERY AFRAID" of the spread of chemical and biological weapons, but we generally try to save our paranoia for special occasions. Advice to *Atlantic* readers: send in some Prozac along with your subscription checks.

SOUTHERN CHARM: With Americans unsettled by economic competition from the newly democratic and free-trading states of the developing world, it's easy to forget that this competition itself reflects the astonishing global progress toward participatory government made over the last decade. Last week offered a reminder. In Paraguay, a country with no history of political accountability and a socioeconomic profile that, according to the social science textbooks of a few years ago, should have rendered it incapable of sustaining democracy, a military coup was turned back. At work was a classic trinity of forces. First, enormous, spontaneous popular mobilization. Though elected President Juan Carlos Wasmosy seemed willing to compromise his government's integrity by appointing the man who defied his authority, General Lino Oviedo, as Defense Minister, his country's citizens were not. Second, Paraguay's neighbors in the Organization of American States, which for years had honored every regime's sovereign right to torment its citizens without foreign interference, acted swiftly. OAS Secretary General Cesar Gaviria, flying on a plane donated by Bolivia, rushed to Asunción to inform Oviedo that crippling sanctions would follow any return to military rule. Third, the United States, whose embassy provided Wasmosy safe haven as he struggled to regain control, decided to defend democracy even in a country of little strategic importance. Said one Paraguayan politician, "We are living through the disappearance, the burial, of the past." And what a heartening burial it is.

AIDS TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN: AIDS activists are at it again. All day last Tuesday, a bipartisan group of congressmen tried to draft a bill requiring states to test newborns for the HIV virus. This will save lives, although

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not as many as possible. For years the Centers for Disease Control tested newborns but were perversely forbidden from releasing the results: if the baby is positive so is the mother and forcing that knowledge on her is a violation of privacy, they argued. But the earlier treatment is started, the better the baby's chance of fighting off the virus. In fact, the best idea would be requiring pregnant women to get tested; by taking anti-retroviral drugs, a mother can reduce her chances of transmitting the virus to her baby from 25.5 percent to 8.3 percent. But, thanks to a claque of AIDS activists, legislators never considered this measure. The activists are understandably worried about mandatory testing in a country where the HIV-positive are still often pariahs. But, to put it bluntly, thousands of children may be spared agonizing, early deaths if their status is discovered early. At press time, the activists grudgingly agreed to a compromise: a trial period, in which states are required only to encourage mothers to let their newborns be tested. Sadly, that's the best that political reality allows.

SNAKE OIL: After two weeks of media pummelling over his refusal to raise the minimum wage, Bob Dole last week offered an alternative explanation for middle-class wage anxiety: gasoline prices, which, he claimed, are "careening out of control and are diminishing the value of millions of American paychecks." His solution? Repeal President Clinton's 1993 4.3 cents per-gallon gas tax increase. Dole is packing a lot of demagoguery into a tiny, ineffectual idea. Gasoline prices are not careening out of control, they're experiencing a temporary boost due mainly to the cold winter and the false expectation that the U.N. would allow Iraq to sell oil. Unlike raising the minimum wage, which could noticeably boost salaries at the lower end of the income scale, the savings from repealing the Clinton gas tax would be pocket change—about $27 a year for most taxpayers. Clinton, in election-year rapid-response mode, came up with his own answer to the gasoline "crisis": selling off a portion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserves, a vast reservoir of oil that the government maintains in case of emergencies. The plan is actually neither new nor his. Congress approved it last year as a way to reduce the deficit. And anyway it's nothing to brag about. The one-time sale of a government asset reduces the deficit only on paper. Converting a government asset into cash isn't the same thing as moving real wealth from the private to the public sector. While Congress's rationale for draining the reserves was to quickly and painlessly raise the revenue needed to balance the budget in seven years, Clinton's rationale today is to lower gasoline prices by expanding the supply of oil. But the sale of such a small amount of oil would have even less effect on prices than would repealing the 1993 tax increase. And, if that's not enough, that same week Clinton approved a congressional proposal to allow, for the first time, the export of Alaskan oil. This will *decrease* the supply of oil on the domestic market, which can only jack up prices at the pump. Boosting supply with one hand while cutting it with the other is no solution, even to a non-problem. What's truly pathetic is that no national politician is willing to voice an unpopular truth: gasoline prices aren't too high, they're too low. Gasoline in Japan and Europe costs at least three times as much as it does in America. Low domestic prices discourage fuel efficiency, which has dropped in the last few years. Clinton's tax increase should have been much higher than it was. Sure, it's too much to expect him to go further during an election year. But he should at least muster the courage to defend the small, sensible things he's already accomplished.

PERHAPS A CHAPERONE? The ethics police have been busy lately. The often useful Charles Lewis of the Center for Public Integrity, who has made a name for himself in Washington by policing campaign finance and other issues, has gone a little bonkers. He told *USA Today* that the president should be scolded for offering to play golf with the highest bidder at a fund-raising auction held at Chelsea's school. "In Washington, time is money, and time alone with the chief executive of the republic—to say it's invaluable is an understatement," Lewis thundered. Look, if Clinton can't be trusted to play golf with someone for a couple of hours without selling out the republic, then he shouldn't be president, and no amount of finger wagging will save us. Such grandstanding over the picayune only diminishes Mr. Lewis's otherwise commendable work.

THINGS COULD BE WORSE:

"What the journalists have failed to point out is that this time, unlike previous fighting in Monrovia, the civilians have not really suffered.... In the past, fighters would rip out people's intestines and use them to string up roadblocks, or cut off people's heads. This time there has been none of that."

—Reginald Goodrich, a senior aide to Liberia's Charles Taylor, explaining to *The New York Times* why his faction's human rights record is not so bad.

DOESN'T SURPRISE US:

Kinsley is Moses on TNT

—the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, April 7

(Thanks to Paul and Judith Harvey of Edina, Minnesota.)

HOME NEWS: This week David Rieff joins our masthead as a contributing editor. He is the author most recently of *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West*, perhaps the most powerful book to have emerged from the Balkan catastrophe (it has just appeared in paperback), as well as books about Los Angeles and Miami. His recent essay in our pages, "An Age of Genocide" (January 29), about the massacres in Rwanda and the meaning of genocide, occasioned a great deal of discussion. We are glad to have his sharp and well-traveled intelligence aboard. •

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Compassion—when it suits them.

LIBERALS FOR A DAY

By Matthew Cooper

Bravo, Pete Domenici. Because of the New Mexico Republican, the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill has been amended to prevent insurers from treating serious mental health problems differently than they do physical health problems. No longer, for instance, could an insurance plan cover ninety days of hospitalization for a physical ailment but only thirty days for a mental health problem. The provision is long overdue, say many health economists. They argue that equity for mental health claims will actually save money in the long run by encouraging people to get serious treatment before their conditions get worse—and more expensive. Even though Domenici's amendment will not force insurers to support endless years of psychotherapy—the deliciously named Woody Allen problem—businesses are fighting this new federal mandate with predictable reflexiveness. They hope to kill it when a final version of a health care bill emerges from a House-Senate conference committee. The opponents include the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers. Even Kennedy himself wants the mental health provision excised, lest it scuttle the larger bill.

The episode points to one of the more intriguing examples of myopia on the right—what might be called the liberal-for-a-day phenomenon. Senator Domenici, who sponsored the mental health provision along with one of his most liberal colleagues, Paul Wellstone of Minnesota, is one of the most popular senators in Washington. He's liked for his personable demeanor, his rectitude, his wariness of supply-side fantasy. For the most part, he is a hard-nosed conservative with a Westerner's disdain for Washington. So why is he to the left of Ted Kennedy on mental health? The answer lies in Domenici's personal experience. He has a daughter who has suffered from mental illness. To his eternal credit, Domenici, along with his wife, Nancy, has done much to raise awareness of mental health issues. Nancy Domenici is active in the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and has even protested to a greeting card manufacturer about its mocking use of the word "schizophrenic" in one of its birthday cards.

It's hard to feel anything but sympathy for parents who have seen their children suffer. But it's worth noting, too, that Domenici's compassion does not easily extend beyond his own family's circumstances. Domenici has fought hard to make sure that the mentally ill have parity with the physically ill. But he's hardly been as determined to make sure that the nearly 40 million Americans who don't have health insurance at all get some kind of coverage. That, it seems, can wait. And, on a number of issues, Domenici has been less than empathetic. The Brady Bill? You might have expected Domenici to favor a bill that would have made it a lot harder for the mentally ill to purchase a gun. He would have been the perfect person to tell gun owners that a waiting period is sensible. Alas, he voted against it.

As you might expect, Domenici is not alone in experiencing a liberal awakening when his own family is involved. Mike DeWine, the junior senator from Ohio and a rock-ribbed Republican, was elected as part of the Newt Revolution in 1994. During his Senate campaign DeWine attacked the government's "regulatory choke hold." And so it's not surprising that, when the massive conservative deregulation effort came up in the Senate, DeWine didn't oppose it even though many senators, including Republicans like Olympia Snowe and Arlen Specter, had, at various times, thwarted debate because many charged the measure would have damaged worker and environmental safety. But DeWine has supported one very heavy-handed form of federal regulation that most conservatives eschew: the federal 55 mph speed limit. DeWine's 22-year-old daughter, Becky, was tragically killed in an auto accident on a rain-soaked highway in 1993. It's hard to imagine anything more anguishing. And it is to DeWine's credit that he's fought for tougher penalties for drunk driving, for simplifying organ donation and for lowering speed limits, even against the wishes of states that want to raise limits or abolish them altogether. But, if he can see the beneficial uses of federal regulation on this issue, why is he often against it elsewhere?

Of course, one-issue liberalism is not uncommon. Alan Simpson joined Domenici's fight for better mental health care benefits in large part because his niece committed suicide. George Will has written eloquently about children with Down Syndrome and the stereotypes they face; his writing is informed by his own son's experience. In 1983, he lashed out at a Reagan official who said the country was spending too much on disabled children to the detriment of those without disabilities. That's exactly the kind of neoconservative argument that Will can usually be counted on to favor. Instead, he offered a nuanced and convincing defense of these programs. But anyone who's read Will knows how rarely he defends a liberal program for its compassion. And, of course, there's Bob Dole. He's been particularly active in helping those with disabilities, an empathy born of his own injuries. At the same time, though, he boasted last year that he was an original opponent of Medicare.

Liberals ought to welcome conservatives to their side whenever they can. But they shouldn't shy away from pointing out that conservative empathy could stand a little elasticity. Dan Quayle told Larry King in 1992 that if his daughter became pregnant, he would discuss options with her. Liberals should have gone crazy: Quayle would consider abortion a family matter for his own daughters but criminalize it for everyone else.

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This kind of conservative myopia is different from straight hypocrisy, which is more common. There's pork-based hypocrisy such as Phil Gramm's unflagging support for big Texas projects like the supercollider, which he favors while, with a straight face, arguing for "less government and more freedom." And there's politically expedient hypocrisy, like Al D'Amato's support for gays in the military, a position that—call me nutty—may have more to do with New York's politics than with the junior senator's personal empathy for homosexuals. No, the Domenici-DeWine fallacy is born of personal experience, and so is at once more understandable and more frustrating. It's understandable because every parent wants to help his or her child; it's frustrating because one would hope that a personal tragedy would at least lead to a wider sense of empathy. Wouldn't it be better if Domenici worked as tirelessly for universal health care as he does against mental illness? Wouldn't it be better if DeWine expanded his commendable concern for auto safety and became the pre-eminent fighter for workplace safety and a much tougher OSHA? And wouldn't it be better if Dole, who runs for president trumpeting his war wounds, did more for society's other underdogs? •

Corporate snooping 101.

CANDID CAMERA

By Mark Frankel

I used to think professional snoops were all variations on Harry Caul, the paranoid, guilt-ridden wiretapper of Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation*. But W.T. "Ted" Sandin clearly loves his work. With the infectious enthusiasm of a high-school camera club faculty adviser, the middle-aged Sandin runs Video Systems Inc., one of the country's leading manufacturers and distributors of covert video surveillance hardware. At Surveillance Expo '95, which brought several hundred private investigators and corporate security specialists (plus a smattering of Armani-clad Middle Eastern and Latin American gentlemen too discreet to expose their affiliations) to the McLean Hilton in Virginia last summer, Sandin was among the top draws. About three dozen conferees paid $100 each to attend his seminar on how to spy on other people in the electronic age.

He did not disappoint. Reminding his scribbling pupils that "surveillance means only extension of the eye," Sandin spent four hours demonstrating a collection of eye-popping miniature video cameras, each seemingly tinier than the last. The smallest was a black-and-white TV camera barely larger than a piece of Bazooka bubble gum. Attached to a tiny transmitter powered by a common 9-volt battery, such minicams can be hidden almost anywhere in a typical office or factory, Sandin explained. Light switches, exit signs or room thermostats are just a few of the possibilities for camouflage. "Be creative," he exhorted us.

In the name of personal security, Americans have already learned to accept and ignore video cameras in the public spaces they routinely pass through: parking lots, elevators, bank lobbies and hotel stairways. (According to STAT Resources, a Massachusetts research firm, an estimated $2.1 billion will be spent on closed-circuit video gear this year alone.) Now they may have to learn to accept them in the workplace as well. Propelled by concerns with worker productivity, industrial espionage, personal security, drugs on the job and skyrocketing insurance liability, corporate America is increasingly resorting to secret monitoring of its employees. An August 1994 report by the Geneva-based International Labor Organization concluded that "Monitoring and surveillance techniques available as a result of advances in technology make methods of control more pervasive than ever before and raise serious questions of human rights."

Consider a few recent cases. In Phoenix, Arizona, Freddy Craig, a longtime elementary school principal, stumbled upon a video camera hidden in the ceiling of his suburban school office—as well as one secreted in the school shower he often used after jogging. The cameras had been installed by the newly hired school district superintendent, who claimed that Craig was under investigation for unspecified "misconduct" with his students' parents. The charges proved groundless.

In Elmira, New York, a former McDonald's restaurant manager went to court seeking $2 million from the burger chain, as well as the local franchise, for invasion of privacy. In addition to overseeing the deep fryer and griddle, the plaintiff, Michael Huffcut, had been conducting an extramarital affair with another McDonald's employee. Huffcut's suit charged that not only did his former restaurant supervisor obtain copies of the romantic messages the illicit lovers left for each other on their office voice mail, he also played the recordings for Huffcut's wife.

Several years ago, the Boston Sheraton Hotel installed a hidden camera in the employees' locker room in what management claimed was an effort to crack a drug ring—and what lawyers for the hotel workers describe as a heavy-handed attempt to discourage union activity.

The threat is not limited to videocams and voice mail. Service industries place millions of workers in front of computer terminals where their performance is easily monitored by remote. Desktop computers, fax machines, pagers, computer networks, cellular phones and e-mail have become as ubiquitous as styrofoam coffee cups in most offices. While employees have been introduced to these contraptions with soothing talk about "personal passwords" and "private files," workers' privacy

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is easily shredded. In one of the few surveys of corporate electronic privacy policies, conducted by *MacWorld* magazine in 1993, of 301 U.S. companies polled, more than one in five had searched their employees' computer files, voice mail, e-mail or other digital network communications. "Users naturally assume that, because they have private passwords, only they can enter their e-mail and private files, ... but even the most insignificant network managers can override passwords and enter files," says Charles Pillar, who conducted the survey.

While researching this article, I struck up an e-mail correspondence with a New York-based high-tech surveillance specialist who told me about his work:

> For a cellular phone interception system, I charge $2,500 to $4,000. This allows the employer to monitor all employees' cellular phone conversations or simply to keep a log of the times and length of calls and any numbers called, etc. It is not actually necessary to listen in on the conversations; they can be logged into a computer. The employer can thus see who has been using these phones for personal use to make $2-a-minute personal calls to the kids....
>
> I've been called to do phone interception work a lot, especially with telemarketer and service representative type workers where the boss monitors the line to make sure that the employees don't have a nasty tone with the customers....
>
> For computer modem interception, I usually charge $3,000. It allows an employer to passively monitor a particular telephone line and intercept the modem data that's going through [it]. The employer can, in effect, see everything that the employee types into his computer and that appears on his screen.

Most American workers assume that their privacy on the job is ensured by constitutional safeguards. Unfortunately, they are wrong. While the Fourth Amendment protects citizens against unreasonable search and seizure by the state, it does not touch private employers, who are free to run their businesses—and spy on their employees—as they please. Current federal privacy laws are case studies in half-measures. While the 1986 Electronic Communications Act prohibits eavesdropping on telephones without a warrant or permission, it provides a loophole that permits companies to monitor employees' calls "for business purposes." And, while privacy laws vary widely from state to state, cutting-edge gizmos such as mini-video cameras are so new they slip between existing wiretap statutes and labor regulations.

Privacy advocates, labor unions and groups such as 9to5, the working women's lobby, have long sought national standards that would regulate workplace surveillance. In the last Congress, Senator Paul Simon and Representative Pat Williams introduced such legislation, the Privacy for Consumers and Workers Act. But the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) opposed the bill fiercely, and it died in committee. Privacy advocates have all but given up on trying to pass a meaningful piece of legislation this session.

Until Congress puts on the brakes, video cameras and other means of workplace surveillance will only get cooler, and more insidious. Back at the Surveillance Expo, Ted Sandin proudly demonstrated the latest thing: body video. Wearing a tiny camera hidden in a pair of plastic sunglasses, he strutted about the stage. In the audience, we watched, mesmerized, as an image of ourselves jiggled on a nearby video monitor. Sandin promised that as marvelous as this micro-gadgetry seemed, even niftier stuff was coming down the pike. After all, he reminded us, "this is a consumer-driven marketplace."

MARK FRANKEL is a writer for *Newsweek International* in New York.

NORTH CAROLINA POSTCARD

EYES ON THE PRIZE

By Robert Lammé

While most of her fellow volunteers are handing out leaflets at the annual Ham and Yam Festival in Smithfield on this sunny April afternoon, 79-year-old retired secretary Mary Lou Ellis is stuffing envelopes in a windowless campaign office. It's a few weeks before the May 7 North Carolina primary, and Ellis, a big woman in an ankle-length floral print muumuu and sandals, is in the midst of a twenty-hour week working for retired Glaxo Pharmaceutical exec and Democratic Senate hopeful Charlie Sanders. She stops sealing envelopes just long enough to explain why she's supporting Sanders instead of former Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt for the dubious honor of taking on Jesse Helms this fall. A little impatient, Ellis says the answer is obvious: "I like Mr. Gantt, but I think Mr. Sanders has a better chance against Jesse. Gantt lost last time, you know."

Too bad North Carolina Democrats aren't taking Mary Lou Ellis's political advice. Their sentiments, however, are easy enough to understand. After all, what's not to love about a black MIT-educated architect who won two terms as mayor in the Republican stronghold of Charlotte, the state's biggest city? Gantt further endeared himself to his party in 1990 when he raised close to $8 million from glamorous liberals like Paul Newman and Barbra Streisand as well as the usual gang of labor unions, teachers, trial lawyers and gay activists who loved the idea of replacing Helms with the first Southern black elected to the U.S. Senate since Reconstruction.

Despite the $17 million Helms threw at him, Gantt actually led with about ten days left in the race. Then Helms unleashed the notorious "hands ad." It showed a pair of white hands slowly crumpling a rejection letter while the narrator intoned, "You need that job. And you

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were the best qualified, but they had to give it to a minority because of racial quotas." Add a Helms mailer to black voters warning that they would face arrest if they weren't registered to vote legally, and the election was over. Helms won, but Gantt achieved something, too—he became a Democratic martyr, a victim of a political lynching by the party's most despised enemy.

These days, Gantt is mounting another formidable campaign—raising money throughout the country, positioning himself as a moderate and treading carefully with the media. All of which makes it difficult for Democrats to sell him out for a rich white retired corporate executive like Sanders, who moved to North Carolina with Glaxo in 1989 and has never run for political office.

But they should. Gantt's a nice guy with sound politics. But he's an urban liberal who opposes the death penalty, and, in hand-to-hand combat with Helms, he doesn't stand a chance. Democrats have a better shot at winning the race with Sanders—his record as a can-do businessman and a newcomer to party politics will appeal to moderates who are the key to winning statewide races in Southern states like North Carolina. And he's already raised at least as much money as Gantt.

Of course, Sanders is no angel. While he was running Glaxo, he was the top contributor to the company's PAC, which funneled money to Helms, Bush and other Republican incumbents friendly to the drug giant. Sanders insists that the PAC was run independently of the company and that as CEO he was uninvolved in decisions about where the money went—a scenario that strains credulity. And the fact that he moved to North Carolina in 1989 but missed voting for Gantt in 1990 because he didn't bother to register doesn't win him any points, either.

But before Sanders's critics write him off as a fat cat carpetbagger, they should take a hard look at a poll conducted by *The Raleigh News and Observer* last fall. Sure, it showed Gantt running neck and neck with Helms—46 percent indicated that they would vote for Gantt, with 45 percent supporting Helms and 9 percent undecided. More surprising, however, was how well Sanders did against Helms. Despite the fact that only 10 percent of those polled gave Sanders a favorable rating and over three quarters did not know enough about him to have an opinion, 40 percent still preferred him over Helms in a head-to-head race.

You would think that those kinds of numbers might make folks reconsider Gantt's favored-candidate status. And some have. While North Carolina's Democratic governor, Jim Hunt, is officially staying out of the race, he's quietly helped Sanders with introductions to donors and support within the party establishment.

Unfortunately, the logic of Sanders's candidacy seems to be lost on the state labor unions, teachers and gay organizations that endorsed Gantt earlier this year. These groups ignore Helms's electoral history—in every one of his re-election campaigns, the senator and his opponent have each sewn up about 45 percent of the electorate early and slugged it out over the remaining swing voters, most of whom are white. In 1990, Helms took 53 percent of the vote to Gantt's 47 percent. In 1984, Helms beat Hunt by four percentage points. In 1978, Helms won his largest margin of victory by defeating John Ingram by ten points. Those aren't overwhelming numbers. Helms can be beaten, but to pull it off his opponent must get his vote out while attracting moderate undecideds and not giving Helms's partisans any more reason to go to the polls than they already have.

What about the black vote? After all, blacks make up about 18 percent of the state's electorate, and, unless they get to the polls in big numbers, Gantt supporters argue, Jesse's as good as re-elected. Who's more likely to get them there than Harvey Gantt?

Well, there's always Bob Dole and Bill Clinton. In 1990, Helms vs. Gantt was the only statewide race in North Carolina. This time around, the presidential race, a gubernatorial campaign and a number of other statewide races are on the ballot. Surely, the prospect of seeing Dole elected president or losing the governor's race to a Republican will give black voters reason enough to turn out.

Which brings us to the issue of race. It's a sad fact, but a fact nonetheless, that North Carolina simply isn't ready to elect a black man to the U.S. Senate. Some of the state's black politicians have been willing to face this. Rex Harris is the former state chairman for Jesse Jackson's 1988 presidential campaign bid and a prominent black Democrat in Fayetteville, the state's fourth-largest metro area. "No black will beat Jesse Helms," Harris told the Associated Press. "I think many of us here feel that [Sanders] has the chance to beat Jesse Helms." For black Democrats like Harris, the goal is to get rid of Helms, not to go down in flames with the satisfaction of knowing they supported the politically correct candidate.

Of course, if the Republican incumbent were a moderate in the Arlen Specter mold, it might be worth risking the election for the chance of getting Gantt into office. But Helms isn't Specter—he's a poster boy for the GOP's right wing and a kneejerk vote against everything from environmental protection to sane welfare reform. As chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Helms has been a nightmare. Since taking over the committee last year, he has wreaked havoc with the day-to-day operation of American foreign policy—freezing dozens of ambassadorial nominations as well as consideration of the START II and Chemical Weapons Convention arms treaties. Taking Helms out would be a body blow to the Republican Revolution and a service to both North Carolina and the country.

Even with Sanders on the ballot, beating Helms is still a long shot, of course. But it can be done. The same *News and Observer* poll showed that Helms is almost as unpopular with North Carolina voters as Bill Clinton. Forty-five percent of the 601 adults polled disapproved of Helms's performance in Senate, while 49 percent disapproved of the president's tenure.

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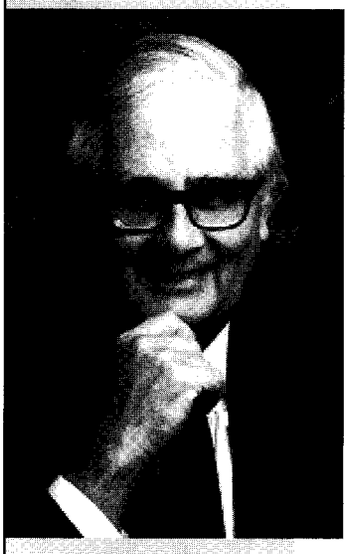
FAIR TRADE AND HARMONIZATION



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There's also hope that Helms will be weakened by his recent falling out with the Raleigh-based Conservative Club, the political machine that has steered him to victory since 1972, and with Carter Wrenn, the club's political mastermind, who managed Helms's last three campaigns. Helms lost another close aide earlier this month when Alex Castellanos, one of the strategists behind the hands ad, left the campaign in a dispute over a TV spot accusing Sanders and Gantt of supporting Clinton, racial quotas and benefits for homosexuals and their partners. Facing Sanders without Wrenn and Castellanos, Helms's new hatchet men will have to come up with a strategy for beating a pro-business moderate who has created thousands of new jobs without ever having cast an unpopular vote.

With Gantt on the ballot, on the other hand, the Helms strategy is a no-brainer: just crank up the 1990 campaign and start pounding away. Once that happens, North Carolina Democrats' only hope to replace Helms is Divine Recall. In that race, Helms is a safe bet against the Devil any day.

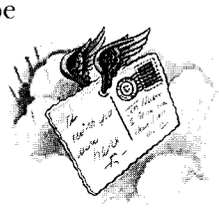
ROBERT LAMMÉ is a North Carolina-based freelance writer.

WEST BANK POSTCARD

THE BURBS

By Gershom Gorenberg

"We're bargaining chips," Tomi Kardos says. "Bargaining chips when the town was built, and in the negotiations." A big man with a built-in smile, he leans back into the couch in his generic suburban living room. Hanging plants adorn the stairs to the front door and his dental surgery clinic. "I've got hope and worries," he says, knotting his forefingers together. "Hope that I'll go on enjoying my quiet life here, worries that one day someone will come and say, 'You've got two weeks to get out.' "



Kardos lives in Alfei Menasheh, a settlement that looks like a piece of the San Fernando Valley pasted onto the hills of the West Bank. At the local shopping center, kids on Rollerblades hang out next to the snack shop. A block uphill, at the town's sports center and indoor swimming pool, mothers drop children off for after-school lessons. The boys are bareheaded; almost no one here wears a skullcap, the media symbol of the Orthodox right-wing settler.

In the past weeks, world attention has been trained on the battered towns of the country's north, but it is the Israelis living in the occupied territories whose plight will ultimately do more to define Israel's future. And, as it happens, Alfei Menasheh residents are more representative of the approximately 140,000 Israelis living on occupied land than are the religious zealots who populate the tiny outposts scattered along the West Bank's mountain ridge. In the late '70s and early '80s, Likud governments concluded that the messianic fervor of the fundamentalist movement Gush Emunim wouldn't provide enough settlers to make Jewish rule of Greater Israel irreversible. So the state began building large bedroom communities in the West Bank, some on sites designed by the mid-'70s Rabin government to create a security belt around Jerusalem or to widen Israel's narrow waist north of Tel Aviv. With generous government subsidies, middle-class Israelis could afford more spacious apartments or, for the first time, private homes. The strategy worked; Hebrew University professor Ehud Sprinzak estimates that today only a fourth of all settlers belong to the culture of Gush Emunim.

The result is ironic. Alfei Menasheh was built to serve nationalist ideology, yet, with virtual unanimity, residents say they came for "quality of life"—a house, a yard, quiet, a wholesome atmosphere in which to bring up kids. It was a suburban dream naïvely free of politics, even opposed to politics as such—"We were a legal settlement, built by the government," as locals like to say, putting aside the debate over the future of the territories that has torn the country into two ragged sides. As one resident of Alfei Menasheh puts it, "People here don't make waves."

Like most big settlements, Alfei Menasheh is close to the old border—one selling point was the short commute to jobs in Tel Aviv. For that reason, it's still possible in principle to turn most of the West Bank over to the Palestinians while leaving Tomi Kardos and his neighbors under Israeli rule. A study published a little over a year ago by Joseph Alpher, then-head of Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, showed that if Israel annexes just 11 percent of the West Bank in a final settlement it could still keep 70 percent of the settlers. Alpher's map includes the Western Samaria region where Alfei Menasheh is located. His plan would relieve the multi-billion-dollar headache of paying compensation to settlers forced to move, but it wouldn't cure the more serious political problem: ideologues deep in the West Bank who, in marked contrast to the obedient burghers of Alfei Menasheh, would be likely to organize angry opposition to a pullout, including civil disobedience and possibly violence.

Alpher's plan has influenced, or perhaps simply articulated, Labor Party thinking. Prime Minister Shimon Peres's unofficial deputy, Yossi Beilin, who has held equally unofficial talks with confidants of Yasir Arafat, says, "I can't promise, but my estimation is that it's possible to reach a final-status agreement in which most of the settlers live under Israeli sovereignty, and in which no settlement is dismantled, even if it isn't under

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Israeli sovereignty." In other words, most settlers would remain within Israeli territory, and those beyond it could either stay put and live under Palestinian rule or take compensation and get out.

A newspaper report in late February claimed that Beilin has already arrived at a final-status agreement that includes Israeli recognition of a fully independent Palestinian state and the hand-over of the strategic Jordan River Valley to the Palestinians in 2007. But Beilin denies this, and neither he nor Peres will present a map before final-status talks begin in earnest, for fear that ultimate goals will turn into opening positions, to be whittled away.

The largest of the West Bank settlements is Ma'aleh Adumim, just east of Jerusalem in the Judean Desert, with about 20,000 people. Apartment buildings in the shape of steps, giving each family a big porch, climb up parched hillsides like suburban pueblos. At the edge of town, next to a Bedouin encampment, bulldozers are flattening lots for new neighborhoods, and cranes hover above the shells of apartment houses swarming with workers. While the Rabin and Peres governments froze new construction in most West Bank settlements, building has only been slowed in Ma'aleh Adumim. And at the town's commercial center—a massive concrete maze combining Israeli fortress architecture and prefab tastelessness—a happy realtor tells me that as-yet-unbuilt homes "are getting snapped up. We thought the peace process would hurt sales, but it hasn't at all." In an October speech sketching what parts of the West Bank he'd keep in a final-status agreement, Yitzhak Rabin specifically named Ma'aleh Adumim and Givat Ze'ev, another Jerusalem suburb of 7,000 people.

Givat Ze'ev's mayor, Shaul Mizrahi, a fast-talking local patriot who brags about his town's schools, property values and "highest socioeconomic profile in Greater Jerusalem," starts off sounding sanguine about the future. "We're part of the national consensus. Rabin said Givat Ze'ev is in Israel. The government knows people here aren't settlers; they came for a better life." Mizrahi, a Likud man, says that if his party wins the May 29 elections it should aim to ensure "that a large part or most or all of the settlements" are in Israeli hands. The heresy of "a large part or most" implicitly draws a line in the sand between his community and the Orthodox outposts.

In Alfei Menasheh, as well, confidence veils worry. Dov Edelstein, a Holocaust survivor who spent thirty years as a Conservative rabbi in the U.S. before retiring here, says, "There's no doubt that Alfei Menasheh will soon officially be part of the State of Israel."

"I hope so," his wife, Gitta, says quietly.

"But as for those further in ... " he says, then breaks off and represses doubt. "It's unimaginable that they'd abandon settlements."

Rafi Ben-Shosh, owner of Alfei's snack shop, can imagine it easily. Ben-Shosh, like many townspeople, is an ex-career officer. While still in military uniform, he owned a home in the Sinai settlement of Yamit. "No one believed there could be an evacuation," he says. A month before Israel's 1982 pullout under the peace treaty with Egypt, he took his compensation check and left—avoiding the final days, when soldiers physically removed demonstrators, mostly Gush Emunim supporters, and the army razed the town.

Sarka Shalev, a schoolteacher, and her husband, Tuvia, former members of a left-wing kibbutz, also live in Alfei Menasheh. She admits she's uncomfortable in the territories but says that's where they could afford to build. Her husband "can't believe" Israel would give up the ridge where the town stands, above the country's waist. "Security-wise, it would be suicide," he says. Sarka disagrees: "It's definitely possible." Sixteen years ago, the eldest of their four sons died in a skirmish in Lebanon, and Sarka wants peace: "I'm willing to pay a price," she says.

"As long as they give us good compensation," Tuvia adds.

"So I can buy a home somewhere else," Sarka says.

With uncertainty comes indecision. Neither knows who to vote for in the upcoming elections. Indeed, the floating vote is surprisingly large here, a hint that Labor might hold onto some votes in the suburban settlements—though any forecast is dangerous in this year's volatile atmosphere. Most townspeople put themselves right of center but measure politics by their homes. "I'm for keeping all of Judea and Samaria," one trim ex-officer tells me. "But Alfei Menasheh is more important to me than some little outpost." No one, however, considers staying under Palestinian rule; no one thinks of violent protest, either. If there's a pullout, "we get up and leave," says the ex-officer, spreading his hands in resignation.

For some upbeat words, I drop in on Edna Belapolsky, a 38-year-old teacher who doesn't just live in Alfei Menasheh but believes in it. "Quality of life is also a cause," she once told me. Belapolsky wrote the town's anthem and runs its archives. At high speed, defensive and excited, she talks of Alfei Menasheh's small-town pleasures: "If there's a ceremony at school, it's open to the whole town. We have a youth choir, a community theater, an adult choir; the Independence Day celebration is a project people work on all year." Shopping for a party to vote for, she hopes the Likud will move toward the center, but says of a Labor victory: "If their approach is to strengthen places close to the border, it could be good for us." Or maybe not. "I'm a bit concerned," she tells me. "I'm the check they'll pay for peace."

Meanwhile, in the government complex in Jerusalem, Yossi Beilin's spokesman gives the Labor Party spin. Likud will freeze the peace process, leaving the settlements in limbo; only Labor, he says, offers most settlers the hope of remaining within the borders of Israel. Their settlements would finally be what their residents want them to be: quiet apolitical suburbs. That leaves open the question of what Israel would give up, in the diplomatic dickering, in return for their quality of life.

GERSHOM GORENBERG is co-author of *Shalom, Friend: The Life and Legacy of Yitzhak Rabin* (New Market Press).

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THE NORMAL PERSON OF TOMORROW

By Michael Lewis

April 25:

Ralph Nader is different from other presidential candidates. The literature on him is endless, for instance, even though he has never stood for office. It runs from Nader's own books on corporate wrongdoing to books by Naderites on all manner of social ills to miles of congressional testimony to children's books about Nader, complete with drawings of little Ralph. There is a book called *Me & Ralph: Is Nader Unsafe For America?* written twenty years ago by a former managing editor of TNR named David Sanford. Over 135 blistering pages it details how the author, who edited Nader's articles for this magazine, came to loathe Nader—and fear he would run for president. There is another book, called *Ralph Nader Will You Marry Me?*, by Amy Deveraux, a minister in the Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness in California, who spent twelve years chasing after Nader and writing him poems, letters, songs and even a stage play. ("I was so happy to see him," the author writes, of her most intimate encounter with Ralph, "that I beamed up at him and started singing my solar energy song. Ralph tried to cut me off by gruffly saying he had already heard it, and his secretary grabbed me by the shoulders and muscled me down the hall.") This man whose career has been chiefly concerned with the nuts and bolts of consumer safety evokes strong and unruly passions.

Maybe that's why Nader is harder to find than other presidential candidates—though when you finally do, he is accessible in a way even obscure candidates are not. The first few times I called him he failed to respond. On my fourth try, however, I heard back from him immediately. He seemed to have all the time in the world. "This is not like the other presidential campaigns, you know," he warned me. "I don't intend to go up in the state of California waving signs and shouting and all that." But before he hung up he agreed to take me along the next time he hit the road in the name of the Green Party, which will have put him on perhaps thirty-five state ballots by November.

Then the candidate vanished. Completely. Over the next two weeks I called him a dozen times—to no avail. No one I asked about him seemed to have any idea where he lived or what he did in his spare time. Then one day last week he called out of the blue to ask if I would like to attend a lecture he was giving at Gettysburg College, in Pennsylvania. He told me to be in front of the Dupont Plaza Hotel at 3:00 sharp. He didn't want to keep me waiting, he said.

But he has. At 3:20 I am still shifting my weight back and forth on the pavement. I pass the time reading a yellowing transcript of the congressional hearings about General Motors' lurid investigation of Nader. The story that led to the hearings was broken exactly thirty years ago by James Ridgeway in TNR: "The Dick," it was called. But it was the hearings held by Senator Abraham Ribicoff ten days later that transformed Nader from an obscure Washington lawyer into a national celebrity. The transcripts still make good reading. They open with the president of General Motors offering a predictably lame defense. Then the car company's private detective, Mr. Vincent Gillen of Garden City, New York, has his say. Gillen was Nader's godsend; before he testified, The Dick had used a miniature camera to snap photographs of the senators and other witnesses; during the testimony he confessed that he traveled the country at GM's behest and, on the pretext of conducting an employment background check, asked Nader's old friends about his sexual and financial behavior. The rest is history.

By 3:30 I am starting to worry that maybe I am, too. I call Nader's office. "Don't worry," says the woman who always answers the phone. "Ralph's always thirty minutes late." I return to the transcript. There I read, for the first time, Nader's original testimony. Thus an American legend was born:

> "Mr. Chairman," Nader began, "I owe you a deep apology for being late this morning. I ought to explain it briefly to you and to anyone else in the room. I usually take no more than twelve minutes to come down from my residence to the Capitol by cab. In this instance I gave myself twenty minutes. And I waited and waited and waited to get a cab, and as my frustration mounted, I almost felt like going out and buying a Chevrolet. . . ."

Exactly thirty-five minutes after he was scheduled to arrive, Ralph Nader pulls up to the Dupont Plaza Hotel in a mid-sized Ford. I squeeze myself into the backseat directly behind Ralph and alongside a pair of Gettysburg College students, and we're off. For the next hour and a half I watch the back of Ralph Nader's head, an unruly salt-and-pepper tangle that tumbles down over

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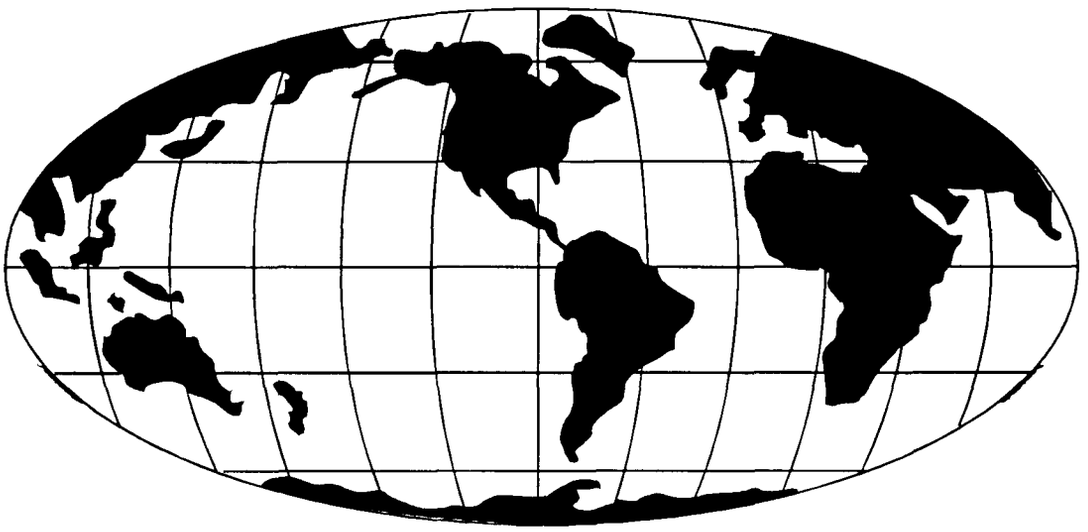

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the exposed white tags on his shambolic windbreaker. He alternates between scratching out his speech with a number-two pencil and responding to my questions until he grows weary of them and starts asking his own. Nader is interested in just about everything political. He wants to know, for example, if the oddball third party candidates that he encountered in New Hampshire in 1992 are still around in 1996 and is delighted to hear that they are. He wonders whether I agree that Alan Greenspan's confirmation hearings, at which he was the lone dissenting voice, were "the closest thing we have to what it must have been like in the old Soviet Union." He asks if I ever noticed the way conservatives are more likely to be compassionate when they actually see what happens in the world. His favorite example of the phenomenon is George Will, who, immediately after seeing a woman die in a car crash outside his home, penned a column demanding mandatory air bags. "It was a rare event," says Nader. "A professional conservative forced to confront reality."

For my part I am preoccupied. As we whizz off the Beltway and into the countryside I notice that everyone but me is strapped down tightly; it's not often you see people so well trussed to a backseat. I confess my negligence. "I can see the headlines," I say. "NADER DIES IN CRASH: IMPALED ON PEN OF ROCKETING JOURNALIST." In a flash Ralph turns and locks my door. "I've just increased the likelihood of that," he says. Then he adds: "Don't worry. I'll be your airbag."

At Gettysburg, Nader takes the stage for what will be a two-hour lecture, followed by question time. He won't leave the stage until the last question is answered. He begins at seven o'clock. He will not finish until nearly eleven. In those four hours an entire worldview—and a partial presidential campaign—emerges.

The worldview can be broken down roughly into two parts: Nader's critique of markets and Nader's critique of American democracy. Nader is no socialist—he is too acutely aware of the power of market incentives. The difference between Naderism and socialism is that Nader picks his spots—he accepts the logic of the market but focuses his fierce energies on the places where it has failed or might fail: monopolies, public goods and so on. Underpinning his views is his belief that markets are made up of consumer psychology and that psychology can be tinkered with for the commonweal. "For example," he says, "there is now a market for seat belts. People will pay for them. Why did that happen? People learned. You have to teach people what they want. Corporations understand this—they create wants all the time. But we need to create other wants."

Nader's view of democracy forms a kind of corollary to his view of markets: what he calls the "two party duopoly" has so ossified that the difference between Clinton and Dole, for instance, is negligible. Both parties are equally beholden to corporate interests, which intersect with the well-being of society only by accident. Just as Nader's solution to market problems is an active, well-informed consumer, his solution to political problems is more active, better-informed voters.

In a nutshell that is Nader's message—and, in a nutshell, it can sound naïvely technocratic. But as he speaks something more than the message emerges. You can see people edging out on their chairs. Forty minutes into his talk he has moved away from his detailed arguments against hot dogs and fossil fuels and onto an entirely new plane. He is drawing his audience into his peculiar vision of life:

> There are very few people [he says] who are happier than active citizens, even though they take a lot of brickbats and ostracism and ridicule and are in uncomfortable positions. They are furthering their sense of values. They are trying to help other people. That's deeply ingrained in our religious/secular ethics psyche—some people think it's more deeply ingrained than that: it's biologically ingrained.

This theme, once established, expands and contracts until Nader reaches yet another plane:

> Time is the essence here. As young people, you have a different sense of time than people who are older. The longest year in your life was probably when you were 15 waiting to get your license. And, as you grow older, a year is like six months, then three months, then one month. And then it's over. I mean you're 70 years old, and you've lived a fairly good life and raised your kids, and you have some money in the bank for the children and grandchildren. Your grandchild comes and sits on your knee and says, "Grandparent, what did you do with your life?" ... And you're thinking, "How am I going to answer this?" You're thinking ... what are you going to say? I developed an advertising campaign for Geritol? I built up a chain of manicure storefront shops? I represented mergers and acquisitions to make investment bankers and golden-parachute-laden executives richer than the dreams of avarice? And, then, in the merger and acquisitions, all kinds of workers were laid off? How am I going to answer that question?

How strange, I think. The thing to say about Nader is that he is spiritually deficient, a man who worries more about American hot dogs than about world hunger. Yet when he asks, "How much has this nation lost because there are men walking around today with invisible chains?" you can hear it echo over Walden Pond. It's no wonder the Green Party has set upon him with such enthusiasm.

In the college parking lot I tell Nader that he has given me the title for my article. In praising the people who joined Ross Perot's United We Stand he had said, "It's a good thing that they did that. Some of them are eccentric. But so what? The eccentric of today is the normal person of tomorrow. There are a lot of examples of that." "I'm going to call my article 'The Normal Person of Tomorrow,' " I say. No answer.

"Do you consider yourself an eccentric?"

Pause.

And then: "No one calls Michael Jordan an eccentric because all his life he's been trying to get a ball through a hoop," he says. "One hundred and thirty years ago if some guy spent all his life trying to get a ball through some hoop they'd have stuck him in some cave."

"Where did you first see that the good citizen was an

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anomaly?" I ask, to shift the subject.

"There was a man in our town named Mr. Franz," he says. "He was the one who spoke in the town meetings—asking detailed questions of the auditors and so on. And people would look at him as if he were some freak. The guy who took his citizen duties seriously was a freak. You got your town fool, your town drunk and your town citizen."

"Why do you live the way you do?" I ask, as we pull out of town. "The secrecy of your private life only creates suspicion and gives your enemies ammunition."

"That's what keeps me from becoming a jet-set celebrity," he says, "a diversion, an attention person. My parents always told me that the most difficult thing once you've become successful is to stay successful. To be able to endure it. To do it you need to control your time. To do that you need solace, you need privacy."

We are passing the site of Pickett's Charge. Nader is asking the driver, who seems to be something of an authority: How many men died here? Why did they do it? Why wasn't Lee's reputation more badly tarnished? Then Nader sees something that bothers him. Another market glitch: the car window. In the old days, he explains, cars had small windows that enabled the passenger to get fresh air without making conversation impossible. They did away with them, he explains, to reduce the cost and to sell air conditioning. People still want that small window, he insists, but the market will not provide it since it is such a small factor in the overall consideration of which car to buy. It is past midnight and pitch black when we arrive back in Washington.

April 27:

I sit in Skewer's restaurant waiting for Ralph Nader. He's fifteen minutes late, but now I know not to worry. The phone next to the cash register rings. It's Ralph. He's caught the flu. Then he vanishes yet again.

I return to my reading—an account of an exchange between Ralph Nader and Senator Jake Garn that offers some idea of Nader's ability to play rough if necessary. This quality will soon come in handy. Nader appeared before the Senate Banking Committee in 1979 to argue against the Chrysler bailout. He was demanding that the company promise to make safer cars when Garn waylaid him. "I would suggest that if the American consumer knew what you had cost us in the name of consumerism they would run you out of the country," he thundered. The tension builds, and then something strange happens. The fight becomes deeply personal:

> Mr. Nader: I suspect, Senator Garn, that some senator's personal tragedy might not have occurred if the auto industry had listened to some of us in the early years to build safer cars.
>
> Senator Garn: Mr. Nader, I take exception to that. I think that is one of the cruelest comments you have ever made. Yes, my wife died in an automobile accident.
>
> Mr. Nader: And she could have been saved. She could have been saved with cars that should have been built twenty years ago.
>
> Senator Garn: You always know about everything, don't you? You know the circumstances of the accident, you know how it happened, do you?
>
> Mr. Nader: Yes.
>
> Senator Garn: You do?
>
> Mr. Nader: Yes.
>
> Senator Garn: Well, tell me about it, then. Let's find out if you do.
>
> Mr. Nader: I will tell you when this hearing is finished.
>
> Senator Garn: No; I want to know right now. You made an assertion. Let's put some facts with your assertion.
>
> Mr. Nader: It was a crash in Utah, I believe.
>
> Senator Garn: No it was not. It was in Nebraska.
>
> Mr. Nader: All right, Nebraska. That's hardly relevant.
>
> Senator Garn: Typical of your research.
>
> Mr. Nader: And it was a crash that was under a 60-mile-an-hour collision level, and that level of crash should be survivable.
>
> Senator Garn: It was not a crash. It involved no other vehicle.
>
> Mr. Nader: It was a rollover, wasn't it?
>
> Senator Garn: Yes.
>
> Mr. Nader: And a rollover is exactly the kind of preventable injury that the auto companies could have designed for, compared to, say, being hit head on by a trailer truck.
>
> Senator Garn: Are you aware she was wearing a seat belt?
>
> Mr. Nader: Yes.
>
> Senator Garn: Her seat belt was on and fastened. Are you aware that three of my children happened to be with her, and had no seat belts on at all and had no injuries whatsoever?
>
> Mr. Nader: I don't think you are ascribing that tragedy to the seat belt.
>
> Senator Garn: That the personal tragedy of losing my wife of nineteen years, to interject that into a hearing. What kind of human being are you?
>
> Mr. Nader: A human being who is working to save lives on the highway. Don't try and overemote. I'm saying that safer cars would have saved many Americans, including people in a crash of that kind. And for you to try to pillory me because I am trying to say that your wife could have been saved in a casualty of that kind is irresponsible.

Thus runs the dispute between the man whose emotions are all on the surface and the man whose emotions are buried in his principles. Maybe that's how Nader stays on course. What to others would feel coldhearted to him seems like an act of goodwill.

It's hard to say what role Nader will play in the fall election, though he has promised to run for as long as the Green Party will have him. On the one hand he is entirely out of sync with the times. Even old-fashioned liberals seem to have had their fill of trial lawyers and government regulation. Indeed, it was Clinton's decision to sign the bill rescinding the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit that drove Nader round the bend and into the race. On the other hand, capitalism as we practice it is now strangely in need of its critics—so much so that Pat Buchanan, of all people, has arisen to meet the need. The economic system we've perfected over the past 200 years finally enjoys a global monopoly. By its own logic that is not a good thing. After all, the system is premised on the need for competition to keep people and companies in check. But capitalism itself now has no competitors. It is to ideology what General Motors once was to automobiles. And we all know what happened to General Motors. •

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THE THIRD RAIL

By John B. Judis

LARRY KING: "Can a three party system work?"
ROSS PEROT: "There won't be a three party system. One of these parties is going to disappear. One of those special interest parties will have a meltdown."
KING: "Are you saying the Republicans or the Democrats are going to disappear?"
PEROT: "Two will last. That is my fearless forecast."

Here in Washington, campaign junkies obsess about whether Ross Perot's candidacy will help Clinton or Dole. But the more important question concerns Perot himself: Will he succeed in his quest to establish a third party that outlasts his candidacy and supplants the Republicans or the Democrats? Is the eccentric Texas billionaire contributing, wittingly or not, to the transformation of American politics?

Perot first announced his plans to set up a third party last September on his favorite forum, "Larry King Live." He had been mulling the idea over for a long time but moved decisively last fall because his citizens' lobby, United We Stand America, was clearly faltering. Perot launched United We Stand after he announced he was dropping out of the presidential race in July 1992. Its initial purpose, which belied Perot's announced withdrawal, was to put his name on state presidential ballots. After the election, he turned it into a vehicle to lobby Congress and endorse candidates. Perot hired a full-time staff that began organizing chapters in every congressional district.

Though membership expanded rapidly—estimates run as high as several hundred thousand—internal squabbles plagued United We Stand. Several chapters and state organizations rebelled against control from Perot and Dallas. By last summer, according to one insider, membership and funds were also lagging. Perot rested his hopes for the group's revival on an August national conference in Dallas. "Be a part of history" was the convention's call. But, in spite of attendance by the leading Republican presidential candidates, only about 4,000 United We Stand members showed. That sounded the organization's death knell. One month later, Perot announced he was founding the Reform Party.

Part of the impetus came from three political advisers: Gordon Black, a Rochester, New York, pollster Perot hired in March 1993 to conduct surveys for United We Stand; Clay Mulford, Perot's son-in-law and a Dallas securities lawyer who served as counsel for United We Stand; and Russ Verney, the former executive director of the New Hampshire Democratic Party and executive director of United We Stand.

Back when he was conducting surveys for United We Stand, Black had tossed in questions about the appeal of a third party. He told Perot that a viable third party voter base was out there for the taking, as evidenced by the expanding pool of political independents (who now outnumber registrants of either party) and by the growing enthusiasm for the idea of a third party, which hit 62 percent in a *Washington Post* poll last fall. According to Black, these voters represent the center rather than the extremes—"liberal or moderate on social issues, profoundly conservative on fiscal issues, and disturbed by the loss of their democratic influence."

In 1980, says Black, the brainy, bespectacled moderate John Anderson mobilized many of these voters. The former Republican congressman commanded an impressive 25 percent in September opinion polls, but by November a lack of funds had weakened Anderson's candidacy. By the time Perot ran in 1992, the unrepresented center had ballooned from about 40 percent to almost 60, according to Black. And with Perot's deep pockets, he could overcome the "normal barriers to organizing" that had stalled Anderson's and other third party candidacies.

In surveys taken in June 1992, Perot ran ahead of both Bill Clinton and George Bush with 36 percent of the vote. Black suggests that, if Perot had not dropped out in July, he might have won that much in November. Instead, when he re-entered the campaign in October, he was down to 8 percent and could never fully overcome the blow to his credibility. Even so, his final tally was 19 percent, the highest of any independent candidate since Theodore Roosevelt in 1912.

Black's model for a new third party is Charles de Gaulle's successful return to power in 1958. De Gaulle, Black writes in *The Politics of American Discontent*, "returned from retirement to lead a centrist movement of political reform to restructure the political system. Like the Gaullists, the supporters of Ross Perot came from the political center." Black

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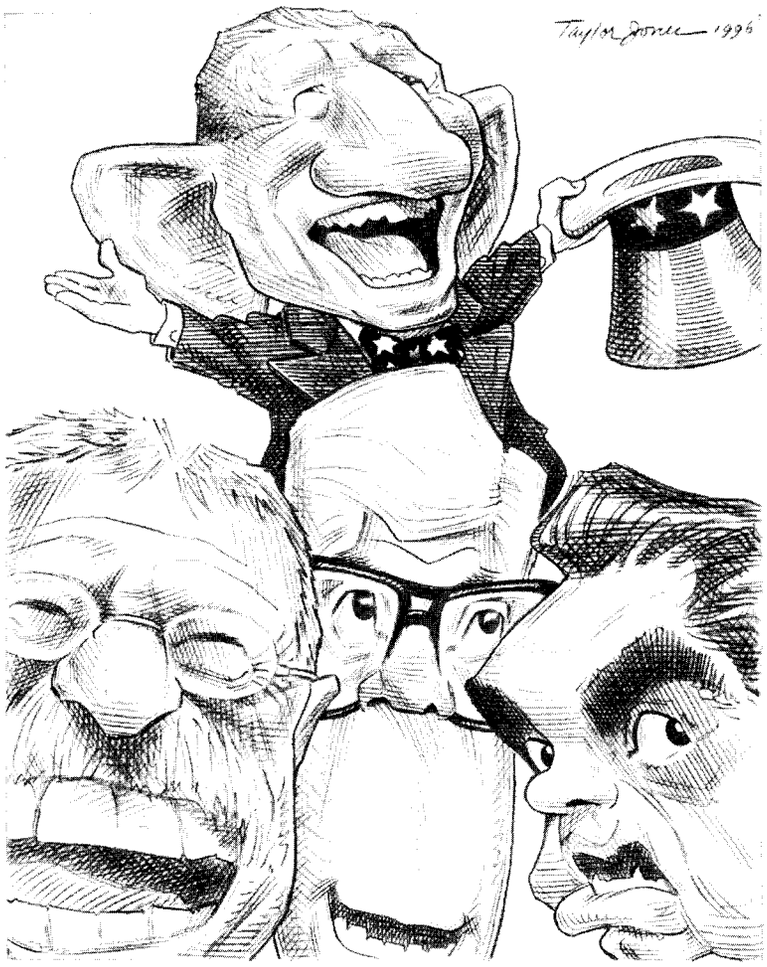
tried to fire Perot up with the de Gaulle parallel: "We first discussed it at a speech in 1993," he says. "I told him, 'I am going to give you an analogy that is kind of funny. It's with somebody who was very tall.' At first he didn't understand it, but then he focused on it."

Like Perot, both Black and Verney envision the new party as an instrument of political realignment. It would either displace one of the two major parties or be absorbed by one of them. Verney, national coordinator of the Reform Party, sees it vying from the center against either a "public-employee-dominated Democratic Party" or a "radical right Republican Party." Mulford takes a different tack. While agreeing that the parties could realign in the short term, he sees a long-term breakup of the old party system, leading to a multiplicity of parties defined by "issue-oriented alliances." Mulford believes that new information-age technologies—from television and talk-radio to the Internet and computerized mailings—allow a third party candidate to reach voters he or she could never have gotten access to in the past. Only archaic election laws are preventing the proliferation of new parties. "Party labels will erode in importance. Issue-oriented alliances will be more important," Mulford explains.



ROSS PEROT AND PAST THIRD PARTY CANDIDATES
BY TAYLOR JONES FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

My own view is closer to Mulford's. As Black and Mulford contend, conditions for third parties have improved. It's not only a matter of candidates' access to new communications technology and of growing voter alienation from the existing parties; Americans have also adopted new ways of expressing their political opinions. Before Perot's run in 1992, third parties were either the instruments of organized movements or direct spin-offs from one of the major parties. George Wallace's American Independent Party, for instance, grew out of White Citizens' Councils and dissident Democratic organizations. But, as locally based organizations—from community groups to trade unions—have atrophied or disappeared, and as urban neighborhoods, organized around common places of leisure and worship, have given way to suburban sprawl, political parties, taking advantage of the electronic media, are becoming immediate, rather than mediated, vehicles of popular protest. Perot's candidacy in 1992 emerged without an organized base. It created and defined its own base.

But, while America may be ripe for a third party, it may not be ready for a classic realignment. For a third party to realign politics, it would have to represent a new majority based on principles and programs that the other parties reject. Such a potential majority doesn't really exist. Black and Perot talk of the independents and the 60 percent who favor a third party as a homogeneous political bloc, but in fact they are deeply divided. Some of these voters, dubbed the "radical center" by Kevin Phillips, are economic nationalists and social conservatives who backed George Wallace in the '60s and '70s and would support Pat Buchanan today if he ran as a third party candidate. Other voters heed the call of Colin Powell's "sensible center," made up of pro-choice moderates and free traders. In 1992, Perot came remarkably close to representing both groups, but it is difficult to conceive of a new political party that could consistently unite them.

Black thinks the different constituencies can be joined by the desire for political reform—term limits, campaign finance reform and the like—but it is hard to construct a political party or movement from issues that have no immediate repercussions in people's daily lives and that can, in any case, easily be co-opted by rival parties. Black's analogy with de Gaulle doesn't really work. De Gaulle stood for political reform, but the French electorate supported his re-emergence because he alone appeared capable of resolving the war in Algeria. Reform came afterwards.

Most likely, American politics is not heading toward the kind of constitutional change represented by

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de Gaulle's Fifth Republic but toward the volatility and instability evidenced in Canada's 1993 elections, when Perot disciple Preston Manning's Reform Party came from nowhere to decimate the ruling Progressive Conservatives and to hand the Liberal Party a majority. Manning's party did not realign Canadian politics; it fragmented and dealigned it.

On the morning Perot was to appear on "Larry King," he called Black to tell him he was taking the final step toward a third party. "Are you happy now?" he asked him. Since then, Perot and a staff, headed by Verney, have been gathering the signatures needed to get on state ballots. In California, Perot spent between $700,000 and $800,000 to gather 900,000 signatures in a month. The Reform Party may not make it onto every ballot, but the name of its presidential candidate will.

Perot and his advisers also drafted a platform that embodies Black's emphasis on political reform as the unifying theme. Five of its nine planks concern campaign, congressional or lobbying reform, including term limits, the abolition of the Electoral College, weekend voting and the restriction of campaign contributions to a House member's district and a senator's state. Other provisions are aimed at balancing the budget through restricting spending and new taxes, but they are declarations of intent rather than specific programs or plans.

The party will choose its nominee after the Democrats and Republicans pick theirs. (Everyone who signs a nominating petition will be eligible to vote—by attending either the main convention in Dallas or one of several satellite conventions around the country.) Perot insists he would prefer not to run this time. Some party supporters would also prefer a different candidate. A particular favorite of local organizers is Ohio Democratic Representative Marcy Kaptur, who wowed the United We Stand convention in August with her attack on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), but who is loyally behind Clinton this year. Business consultant and Republican strategist Jude Wanniski, worried that the Republicans under Dole will become the party of austerity rather than growth, is pressing Jack Kemp's name as a Reform Party nominee. Gordon Black told me he would rather someone other than Perot run, but doesn't believe that will happen. "I don't think Perot tried to reach out to other prominent people. He talked to them at various times, but he didn't reach out to them." Black believes that the problems of financing a campaign now leave no alternative to a Perot candidacy. "There is no chance for it happening without him," he says, "because there is no way to fund anyone else."

Clearly, Perot recognizes that a party championing political reform will have to live up to its own principles by soliciting "millions of people" to make "small contributions." But it's already too late for the party to rely on such contributions this year; its candidate couldn't raise enough money to compete on television with Dole and Clinton. If Perot runs, and doesn't take federal funds, he can spend as much as he wants on his own campaign. He sunk $73 million into his last go-round, more than either Bush or Clinton, and this splurge was clearly a major factor in lifting his percentage of the vote well above Anderson's. As political scientists Steven J. Rosenstone, Roy L. Behr and Edward H. Lazarus point out in *Third Parties in America*, Anderson spent only $1.6 million in 1980 on TV and radio. In 1992, Perot spent $45 million on TV alone, 1.3 times more than Clinton and Bush. If Perot doesn't run, and doesn't find another billionaire to replace him, the campaign would have to rely, by law, on a maximum of $1,000 donations. It could only win federal funding retroactively, as Anderson did in 1980.

The Reform Party is caught in a dilemma. If Perot runs and finances his own campaign, the party will remain his personal vehicle. He can say it's "owned by those 62 percent of the people who are not comfortable with the parties and want a third party," but in business, if not in politics, he who pays owns. On the other hand, if Perot doesn't pay, and if the party cannot recruit a major candidate like Kemp or Powell, it will become simply another sideshow, like the New Party or the Patriot Party. Perot has to run; but Perot, Verney, Mulford and Black also have to figure out how to go from Perot's self-financed candidacy in 1996 to a genuine membership party in 1998 and 2000.

For the Reform Party to enjoy ballot status in most congressional races in 1998, Perot will have to take home at least 15 percent of the vote this November. That's likely, but by no means guaranteed. On the plus side, Perot is a more able politician in 1996 than he was in 1992. Though he'll never admit it, he withdrew in July 1992 partly because he needed a respite from public criticism. He had just returned from a speech before the NAACP in Nashville where he had been unfairly tagged a racist for using the phrase "your people." This year, he is still testy and humorless with the press—even the bumbling David Frost drew steely glances when he made a joke about Perot planning to transfer the White House brick by brick to Dallas—but he has learned how to handle probing questions from journalists and attacks by his opponents with more aplomb. Says adviser Pat Choate, who worked closely with Perot during the bruising NAFTA debate, "He's much thicker-skinned. He can distinguish between attacks that are personal and attacks that are part of the political game."

In 1992, when reporters kept peppering him with the same questions—how he planned to balance the budget, for instance—he'd exclaim defensively, "Give me a break!" Now he's learned the politicians' strategy of rephrasing and reiterating his point without losing his cool. Perot still has the popular touch, and he has refreshed his repertoire of folksy asides. This time around, he likes to preface a statement by saying, "I want to talk to all the Road Scholars in Washington—

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that's r-o-a-d scholars, the people who are street smart and have common sense."

Politically, Perot remains a centrist. He's for balanced budgets but also for raising the minimum wage. He regards abortion as an "ancillary" issue but speaks eloquently and convincingly about personal responsibility. He thinks affirmative action is necessary as a "bridge" toward black economic equality. If there is any substantive change from the Perot of 1992, it's that he has made trade a less prominent part of his agenda—no trade issues show up on his platform, for example.

Perot has also gone out of his way to distinguish his position from Buchanan's. "His message is not mine," Perot told *The Washington Post.* "We don't want to build a wall around America." But in his speeches and when he is pressed by reporters on economic issues, Perot invariably turns to NAFTA, the trade deficit and the export of manufacturing jobs as an explanation for what ails the American middle class. His refrain, just as it was four years ago, is, "You've got to have a growing middle class in order to have the money to pay the bills."

In 1996, Perot can hope to attract two different segments of the centrist vote: Republican-leaning moderates of the sensible center who can't stand Bill Clinton, but don't think Dole is capable of governing effectively, and Democratic-leaning voters who fear for their jobs and standard of living, but don't hear their worries echoed in Dole's belt-tightening austerity or in Clinton's recitation of his bond-market-oriented successes as president.

Perot's main weakness is personal. His sudden withdrawal and re-entry in 1992 and his claim that the Bush campaign planned to disrupt his daughter's wedding convinced many voters that he's out to lunch. When the Pew Research Center asked respondents in March to describe Ross Perot with one word, the top five of twenty choices were "rich," "crazy," "idiot," "egotistical" and "nuts." My own view is that Perot is no nuttier than any other self-made billionaire from East Texas, where populist conspiracy theories outbreed rabbits. But Perot has made the mistake of airing his private gripes in public. (In the case of his daughter's wedding, what happened may have been more complicated. I myself heard rumors about compromising photographs of Perot's daughter. In seeking to excuse his own withdrawal from the race, though, Perot might have stretched these rumors into the more farfetched scenario of the Republicans busting up the wedding.)

According to the Pew poll, Perot's 1996 supporters are younger, less educated and less affluent than their 1992 counterparts. In 1992, 21 percent of Perot's backers were under 30; this year 31 percent are. In 1992, 40 percent of Perot devotees had not gone beyond high school; this year the figure is 68 percent. In 1992, 22 percent made less than $30,000; this year it's 32 percent. Reform Party organizers are making the same discovery. Says Frank Gougher, who collects signatures in Philadelphia, "I went roving up and down Market Street on Tax Day. The people who signed the petition were mainly working-class people. The yuppie types in the skyscrapers didn't bother."

Perot's also pulling much less support at this point from disenchanted conservative intellectuals and activists. In 1992, many members of the conservative Business and Industrial Council were sympathetic to Perot. This year, says President Kevin Kearns, "I have seen no movement to Perot. People I know who voted for him last time have no intention of voting for him this time." Of course, this could change between now and November. Perot has not begun campaigning, and Dole and Clinton have not begun to slug it out. The well-heeled Texan might not get support from disillusioned party operatives, but, if Dole continues to flounder in the polls, Perot will begin to get serious attention from many of the upscale voters drawn to him four years ago.

In the current polls, Perot is clearly taking more support from Clinton than from Dole, but William Schneider argues persuasively in the *National Journal* that Perot will still hurt Dole more in November. At 42 percent, Schneider argues, Dole's support is "down to the hard-core GOP base." As the race tightens and more independents and moderates lean toward the GOP nominee, Perot will begin to siphon more votes from Dole than from Clinton. Says Schneider, "The minute Dole stands a chance of beating Clinton, Perot could come in and split the anti-Clinton vote."

On the other side, Ruy Teixeira of the Economic Policy Institute argues that Perot's candidacy would hurt Clinton more. "The Clinton campaign is doing pretty well. There is a real chance that the race could settle in with a distinct advantage by early summer," Teixeira says. "The only thing that could dislodge it is change, and Perot is change. Perot could energize white downscale voters. Perot staying out increases the probability that Clinton could maintain his current advantage."

Teixeira could be right, but Perot does not seem to be making the kind of political argument that would hurt Clinton more than Dole. So far Perot has trained most of his fire on the Republicans. And his jeremiads against "mean-spirited campaigning" could make it harder for Dole to chip away at Clinton on the "character issue." That would leave Dole's already meager campaign cupboard bare.

In the end, though, Perot's influence on the election's outcome will be less important than his effect on how well Dole and Clinton do. In Clinton's first term, Perot forced the president and Congress to take deficit reduction seriously and to pass rudimentary (although, unfortunately, largely hollow) lobbying reforms. In 1996, he may force Clinton to heed the distress of workers who have not benefited from this administration's economic wizardry. He may also lay the groundwork for political reforms that make it much easier for new parties to run candidates in the future. Perot and his Reform Party will probably not displace the Republicans or the Democrats, but they may well help transform the way politics is practiced in America. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Striving and Contriving

Bruce Beresford is a sort of hero. He has been struggling for thirty years: first, to have a directing career at all, which is par for the course; second, to make films that are well out of the ordinary, which is not. Born in Sydney in 1940, he emigrated to London on his university graduation day because he was enamored of film and felt that prospects at home were slim. After working on short films through the '60s and holding a job at the British Film Institute, he returned home in 1971 when the situation brightened there, and got the chance to make his first feature. His fifth feature was the first Beresford film to be seen here—*Don's Party,* with the excellent (and lately deceased) John Hargreaves; but it was Beresford's seventh film, *Breaker Morant,* that established him as a sure-handed artist.

This recognition led to his first American film, *Tender Mercies,* set in Texas, which I recently saw for the fourth time and which is a flawless gem. The next one, *King David,* missed the mark, but it required more daring than many other directors have. Perhaps as a result of *Tender Mercies,* he then did another Southern film, *Crimes of the Heart,* in which he dealt easily with the whimsical writing of Beth Henley. *Her Alibi,* despite moments of charm, was a too-light light comedy, but then (the South again) he did *Driving Miss Daisy.* I can report that, after the picture was shot but long before the reviews and awards, Jessica Tandy was extolling Beresford. *Mister Johnson,* from the Joyce Cary novel, was at least skillfully done. *Black Robe* was a visually exquisite historical film about Canada. Then (the South *again*) came *Rich in Love,* quiet, exquisite, stupidly ignored, with Albert Finney as a South Carolinian.

I've gone into the above because it discloses the struggle of a gifted man to make a serious career in a field that always says "yes" to seriousness and then tries to tame it. Even Beresford's lapses show a real reach for the unusual. Yet, by and large, he is still unappreciated. Take one index: there have been books about Bogdanovich and De Palma and such, a spate of books about Tarantino (who may be forgotten five years from now). None about Beresford. Perhaps it's because his style is not to declare a style: to serve his films.

Unfortunately, I'm afraid his new film won't help matters much. First, **Last Dance** (Buena Vista) is—no surprise—superbly made, but it has the bad luck of bad timing: it comes along just after a big hit on a similar subject, *Dead Man Walking.* More: Ron Koslow's screenplay, based on a story by him and Steve Haft, has plenty of flash and sizzle, but it leaves us unsatisfied.

Like *Dead Man Walking,* it concerns a convicted murderer on death row whose turpitude is unquestioned. Like the earlier film, it takes place in the South, Beresford country by now, and the central thrust of the story is not to prove the convict pure but to show that the death sentence is unwarranted. In both films the convict has a champion. Earlier, it was a nun, and though Susan Sarandon never suggested the spiritual qualities that inspired her devotion, at least we could be somewhat persuaded by the role itself, if not by the actress. In Koslow's script, however, the convict's friend is an ex-playboy, whose highly placed brother gets him a job on the governor's staff in the clemency office. As in *Dead Man Walking,* the drama is basically about the champion, not the convict. The nun had, in the film's intention anyway, an agon of the spirit that possibly led to an intercession with Providence. In Koslow's script, it's a rite of passage for an uninteresting young man—from hedonism to some awareness of the existence of others. And all it cost was the execution of a prisoner.

What's worse, the young man is played by Rob Morrow, who combines the least compelling aspects of Dustin Hoffman and Al Pacino. Like them, he's a big-nosed, long-waisted short man in sloppy clothes; unlike them, his power to move us never flickers the needle on the empathy gauge. Morrow is a TV star. I suppose—I hope—that Beresford had no choice in this bit of casting.

On the other hand, the convict is Sharon Stone, and whether or not she was part of the package, Beresford worked a small miracle with her. The Southern accent isn't difficult; for anyone with the slightest talent, generic Irish and Southern accents are the easiest. But there are colors in Stone's performance, shades of self that I've never seen. I imagine that Tandy might have recognized the Beresford touch.

Cinematically, he frames precisely, almost astringently, always evocatively.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Fargo. *The Coen brothers have at last and at least made half a good picture. In this wobbly murder-farce the story of the pregnant police chief is funny. (Reviewed 3/25/96)* **Denise Calls Up.** *Seven New Yorkers carry on life and love, convey good news and bad news, entirely (almost) by telephone and answering machine. A neat trick. (5/6/96)* **Flirting with Disaster.** *A small miracle of lightness and laughter. David O. Russell's script and directing, with this wacky tale of a young man's search for his biological parents, go to the head of the class—with a gold star. (4/22/96)* **I Shot Andy Warhol.** *The 1960s redux. Atmosphere, pathos, bitterness in this recounting of the life of the mad Valerie Solanas. Virtuosic work by the writer-director Mary Harron. (5/6/96)*—**SK**

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Aided with the utter understanding of Peter James's cinematography and John Bloom's editing, Beresford's making of the film is masterly. I wish the script were more worthy of his mastery; but I assume that, once again in the brawl of a directing life, he chose the best he could get just now.

Ma Saison Préférée (Filmopolis) is, unintentionally, a parody of French film seriousness. It's loaded with the apparatus of gravity, but since there isn't any real gravity, it remains apparatus. In a disco, a woman who is unknown to us and is never identified suddenly sings a sad song, and the disco grows suddenly silent until she finishes and leaves. (*La vie* is *triste*, no?) In broad daylight a woman copulates on a park bench with a complete stranger, who remains a stranger, even though she is a practicing lawyer in that city. Conveniently, no one passes by. (*La vie* is *bizarre*, no?) A man fantasizes about his sister's suicide by defenestration, which hasn't happened, then fumbles his own attempt at it. (*Drôle*, no?) At the end, after much emotional turbulence, a family stands around while someone speaks the words of an innocent childhood song. (*Pathétique*?) What more could we have asked of a deliberate parody?

Catherine Deneuve, gorgeous, giving all possible credence to her role, is a married lawyer in Toulouse. Daniel Auteuil, forceful as ever, is her brain-surgeon brother. Insofar as this slog-along saga of family troubles has any point, it's in the effect of the unacknowledged incestuous attraction between the two. He has never married. Her marriage is troubled (lots of gab about it), but the real cause is never faced.

Deneuve has a daughter around 20, played by her own daughter, Chiara Mastroianni, who must be tired of hearing how much she resembles her father. She also has an adopted son of about the same age, slothful and horny. The young pair have a sinuous Arab-French female friend who dances for them topless. Deneuve and Auteuil have a widowed mother, a farm woman. So, and it's hard to miss, we get a spectrum from old-fashioned farm values through educated children, who are unhappy, to the young generation, which doesn't even bother to be unhappy. (Deneuve has a husband, but he's visible only occasionally to be quarreled with.)

André Techiné wrote the screenplay and, besides slapping on a lot of hollow symbology, has coagulated the flow of things with gnomic talk that, in subtitles, is a remembrance of French films past. Techiné directed adequately, but it doesn't matter. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

Resident Theater Hopes

As a result of severe shrinkages in federal, corporate and foundation support for the arts, the non-profit resident theater movement has been increasingly forced to rely on financial sources normally pursued by the commercial theater—namely, box office income and individual contributions. Apart from being notoriously unreliable, dependence on this kind of "privatized" funding represents a growing threat to artistic autonomy and theatrical experiment. It fosters safe program choices designed to appeal either to less discerning audiences or to the idiosyncratic tastes of wealthy donors. I recently visited three institutional theaters in different parts of the country in order to assess how each of them was coping with the new conditions. From what I saw, and on the basis of brief conversations with their artistic directors, it was possible to conclude that all three theaters were still managing to be true to their birthrights, despite the restrictive funding climate.

The American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, now under the direction of Carey Perloff (former artistic director of the Classic Stage Company), is currently delivering a heady blend of thorny new plays and freshly adapted or rethought classics. Like most institutional theaters, the ACT has been forced to abandon its resident company, though a few of the same actors are occasionally employed from play to play. The cast for Perloff's production of **The Tempest** was essentially pickup, some of it imported from Hollywood. Still, the play was acted and staged with genuine imagination, if intermittent power. It was performed in the Geary Theatre, beautifully restored from the ruins of a recent earthquake.

Perhaps because of the ACT's experience with disaster, Perloff was the first director in my experience to make the opening tempest an authentic catastrophe. Usually, this difficult scene is rendered incomprehensible by earsplitting noises and screaming actors (the storm scene in *King Lear* is often drowned in a similar cacophony). Perloff's solution was so simple I'm surprised nobody ever thought of it before. After a charming interpolated interlude, showing the young Prospero adrift in a boat with the infant Miranda, a single held flute note gave way to crashing tympani, a sailor plummeted headfirst from the flies, and shadows of shouting figures were dimly perceived through the sails, as snatches of Shakespeare's dialogue ("We split, we split") were projected onto the sheets. Thus, the spectator could experience the confused terror and tumult of a real shipwreck, while visually processing just enough language to understand the event.

Many of Perloff's other ideas were equally fresh, and her physical production was a striking blend of Edwardian elegance and Caribbean panache. David Strathairn is an excellent domestic actor, stalwart and dignified, if not quite majestic enough to realize the heroic size of the character. His Prospero was dark and brooding but lacking in poetic authority. The scene in which Prospero instructs Miranda about their past, always a bit tedious, was a real snooze here, partly because Miranda was played by an actress closer in age to his wife than his daughter, partly because Strathairn proved unable to relax his trademark taciturnity. In some productions, Prospero's magic is in the stage effects, in others in the music. Here it was in the lighting, which Strathairn manipulated like a master electrician, at times turning into a shadow himself.

David Patrick Kelly created a melancholy and melodious Ariel, while retaining a trace of sneering menace; Graham Beckel was a loutish animalistic Caliban, his snout muzzled so he wouldn't bite; and Gerald Hiken played a warm rabbinical Gonzalo. Geoff Hoyle, as Stephano, turned this besotted butler into a bibulous Jeeves, while "L.A. Law"'s Michael Tucker, spitting sea water on his first appearance, gave some hint of how W.C. Fields might have played Trinculo. Perloff provided a generous amount of Balinese shadow play behind sheets, some of it replacing the Masque, which she wisely cut. In a season of *Tempests*, Perloff's version was not as flashily executed as that of George C. Wolfe, but it was a lot more intelligently conceived.

At the Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Stan Wojewodski, its artistic director (and Dean of the Yale School of Drama), is fashioning adventurous sched-

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ules which, though hardly starting box office stampedes, are reconsolidating Yale's dedication both to fresh visions and to theater training. (Along with the usual professional presentations on the Rep's schedule, Wojewodski annually includes one show entirely staffed by students.) The production I saw was Suzan-Lori Parks's remarkable **Venus**, produced in association with the New York Shakespeare Festival prior to its appearance at the Joseph Papp Public Theatre. It is true that *Venus* played to small audiences, many of whom decamped before the final curtain. But it nevertheless represented a strong endorsement of the resident theater's risk-taking mandate.

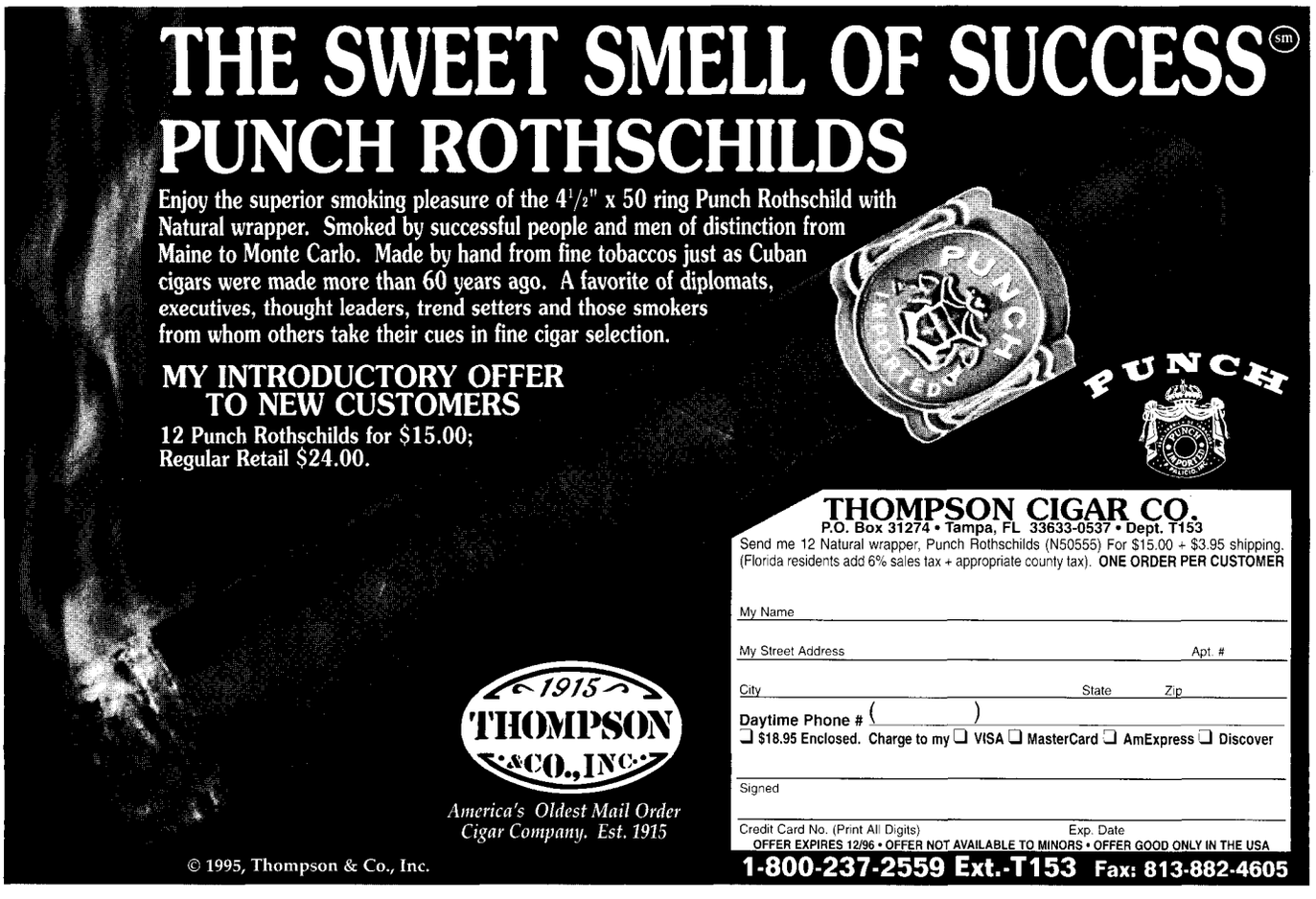
Parks's work has been attracting some very interesting radical directors, among them Liz Diamond and Marcus Stern. *Venus* was staged by the daddy of them all, the redoubtable Richard Foreman, who also provided the splendid production design. Matching Parks's passion for excess scene by scene, he proved an inspired choice. *Venus* is the story—filtered through the playwright's modernist perspective and Joycean language—of an actual historical figure, the Venus Hottentot, abducted from her South African home in the early nineteenth century to become a phenomenon of English freak shows because of her gargantuan breasts and buttocks.

Although the play bears some similarity to *The Elephant Man*, Parks wisely avoided pushing sympathy buttons. Her Venus is hugely exploited, but, whatever her conditions, she always retains an aristocratic dignity and sangfroid, laced with gentle irony. Venus is exhibited, manhandled, seduced, infected with clap, anatomized and finally autopsied by fatuous physicians who think they have found the missing link. Leering customers poke her butt with canes and umbrellas and ogle her "backie, her bum, her spanker." One cowardly if doting lover makes her his mistress and spirits her to Paris to avoid social ostracism. Yet the play is not so much an indictment of white oppression as of European smugness and insularity. As with her previous work—notably *The America Play* and *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World*—Parks manages to portray the humiliation of blacks in white society without complaint or indictment. *Venus* is not a victim play but a powerful dissent from narrow European concepts of female beauty.

The play needs editing (the play-within-a-play could easily go). And so does Foreman's production, which contains enough rich theatrical ideas for five such extravaganzas. Employing his customary alienation techniques (strings across the stage, blinding lights, continuous acoustical accompaniment), Foreman prodigally expends his brilliant inventiveness, at the same time directing his talented cast with absolute precision. The lovely Adina Porter as the amply bottomed Venus is especially spellbinding, but so are Peter Francis James, Sandra Shipley and Mel Johnson Jr., playing a variety of roles, both white and black. This interracial, intersexual and intercultural pageant represents a major advance for an integrated American theater.

At the Arena Stage in Washington, things are more corporate and traditional. Still, in an otherwise somewhat conventional season, Douglas C. Wager, the artistic director, has had the nerve to commission JoAnne Akalaitis to stage Strindberg's little-produced **Dance of Death**. The result is a triumph for the Arena and another vindication for Akalaitis, expelled from the New York Shakespeare Festival before she had the opportunity to fulfill her vision for it.

Dance of Death brings back the warring couple of Strindberg's *The Father* (now a lot older and renamed Edgar and Alice). The misogyny of the earlier play, though hardly abated, is here leavened with surprising tenderness. Written toward the end of Strindberg's life, it takes place, like many plays by aging men (Sophocles's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Philoctetes, Shakespeare's *Tempest*), on an island where Edgar runs a military lighthouse. With the aid of a magnificent design team (sets by John Conklin, costumes by Gabriel Berry, lighting by Jennifer Tipton), and using a terse, sensibly abridged adaptation by Bill Coco and Peter Stormare, Akalaitis creates a brooding atmosphere of rocks and sea where time is often suspended, and people are ashamed of being human.

As the dark sky turns amber, and the tormented characters enact their passion within, uniformed guards in spiked helmets and upraised swords circle the lighthouse at a glacial pace reminiscent of the Cologne section of Robert Wilson's *the CIVIL warS*. One visitor smells poison leaching from the walls: "There's so much hatred in here it's hard to breathe." As in *The Father*, the male character goes into a coma. This time he recovers ("Alice, call off the celebration, I'm not dead yet") in time to torture his wife further. Although she makes love to a visitor before his eyes, she cannot leave Edgar: "You're the biggest shit and hypocrite I ever met—but at least you're a man." They prepare to celebrate their silver anniversary. After all, it is their fate to be each other's hell.

Two Arena actors, Henry Strozier and Tana Hicken, make a ferocious pair of sexual gladiators, he rasping and croaking with rage, she furious because he "didn't die before I was born." *Dance of Death* is not the Truth about marriage, but every married couple will recognize it as a bit of the truth, as well as the main source for Albee's similar marriage play, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Strindberg remains the great chronicler of the war between the sexes, a confirmed woman-hater who nevertheless understood women better than Ibsen and wrote them better parts.

Akalaitis's scorching *Dance of Death* is one of the landmarks of recent stage history. Along with what's happening at the ACT and YRT, it suggests that, despite economic woes, the resident theater movement is not quite ready yet to throw in the towel. While some institutional theaters are attempting to relieve financial stress by relying on revivals of recent New York hits—or trying out shows on their way to New York—these three companies still manage to remind us of why people originally went into non-profit theater, and with what hopes. •

Infra Dig

BY BERNARD KNOX

Schliemann of Troy: Treasure and Deceit by David A. Traill

(St. Martin's Press, 365 pp., $24.95)

The Discovery of the Greek Bronze Age by J. Lesley Fitton

(Harvard University Press, 212 pp., $29.95)

In the introduction to *Ilios*, published in 1880, Heinrich Schliemann tells the dramatic story of his childhood resolution to find the ruins of Troy. When he was nearly 8 years old, his father gave him as a Christmas present a copy of Jerrer's *Universal History*, which contained an engraving showing Troy, with its huge walls, ablaze. His father told him that it was "merely a fanciful picture," but he admitted that the walls did once exist, whereupon young Schliemann staked his claim to future glory. "'Father,' retorted I, 'if such walls once existed, they cannot possibly have been completely destroyed: vast ruins of them must remain, but they are hidden away beneath the dust of ages.'" His father maintained the contrary, "whilst I remained firm in my opinion, and at last we both agreed that I should one day excavate Troy."

This story, or some version of it, appears in all the many Schliemann biographies, but David Traill firmly rejects it as fiction. "We have the voluminous letters and diaries of Schliemann from all periods of his adult life," he points out. "To date no one has found a passage prior to 1868 in which Schliemann gives an inkling of an interest in excavating Troy." In Schliemann's book *Ithaque, le Péloponnèse et Troie* (1869), an account of his visits to Ithaca (where he actually made a small excavation), to Mycenae, and to the two places favored by scholars as the site of Troy, he made no mention of his boyhood vow, only a vague reference to fascination with Homer. "At last," he writes, "I was able to realize the dream of my whole life, and to visit at my leisure the scene of those events which had such an intense interest for me. . . ." It was later, in 1880, when he had excavated successfully at Hisarlik and found what he called "the treasure of Priam" that the "incident was devised to foreshadow these achievements."

Traill's biography is the latest, the fullest and the most judicious contribution to the demythification of Schliemann. That demythification began in 1972 with a lecture by William M. Calder III at Schliemann's birthplace in Neubukow in East Germany. The occasion was a commemoration of the anniversary of Schliemann's birth, but Calder's lecture must have raised some eyebrows in the audience. He examined a number of implausible, even incredible, stories in Schliemann's diaries, prominent among them an account of his visit to the White House to call on President Fillmore in 1851. Schliemann explained his presence to the president by his "great desire to see this beautiful country of the West" and his duty to pay his respects to the president. "He received me kindly, presented me to his wife, daughter, and father, and I had 1 ½ hours conversation with them." He was invited to stay for a reception attended by 800 guests, and the president introduced him to "Mr. Webster, Secretary of State; to Mr. Clay, Senator of Kentucky, and to several others . . . I staid [sic] there till 11 o'clock."

Schliemann was not yet famous as the discoverer of Troy. This cordial reception of an unknown and uninvited businessman from Russia a few hours before a huge White House reception is an obvious, even ridiculous fabrication. And yet it had been accepted, together with many similar stories, by Schliemann's biographers. "The mendacity of Schliemann," Calder concluded, "is exceeded only by the gullibility of his biographers."

Meanwhile Traill, who had been studying Schliemann's business operations in Sacramento in 1851-52 during the Gold Rush, was inspired by Calder's article to take a close look at Schliemann's eyewitness account of the San Francisco fire of 1851. The diary entry is dated June 4 and describes his hurried departure from his hotel just before it caught fire and his view of the burning city from Telegraph Hill. Unfortunately, the fire occurred on the night of May 3-4; and it is not a question of a simple mistake, for this entry is preceded by two for May. In any case, the vivid details in his account are all to be

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found in the reports printed on May 6 and 7 in the *Sacramento Daily Union*.

Still, self-glorification in a diary never intended for publication does not justify skepticism about the veracity of excavation reports. Thus Calder suggested that only "specific interpretation must be queried and often discarded." In 1975, however, G.S. Korres, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Athens, pointed out that Schliemann, when he published the texts of twelve short inscriptions in 1888, made a claim that was "*contre toute conscience scientifique*": the claim that he had dug the inscriptions up in the garden of his house in Athens. Four of them had previously been published between 1842 and 1871 and had belonged to private owners from whom Schliemann must have bought them.

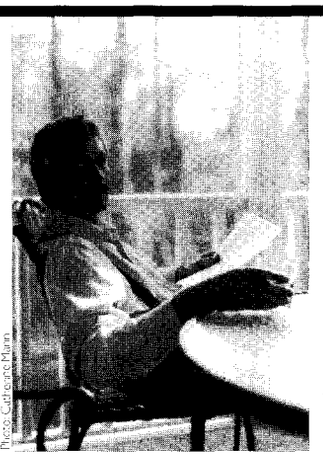
In 1983 Calder organized a conference at the University of Colorado on the theme "Heinrich Schliemann: Myth or Scandal?", and in 1986 the papers delivered there, together with a valuable edition by Traill of Schliemann's excavation diary at Mycenae, were published under the title *Myth, Scandal and History*. The book is a full-scale attack on the veracity of Schliemann not only as an autobiographer but also as an archaeologist. Calder's "New Picture of Schliemann" covers both sectors. Schliemann's "scholarly books," it appears, "like those of other 19th century German authors ... yield a greater affection for the first person than some modern scholars would approve"—an observation followed by a paragraph of nine lines in which Calder himself uses the first person six times. On the archaeological side he cites a number of articles by Traill that argue, among other things, that the so-called "Treasure of Priam" was not found where Schliemann claimed it was, nor all at once. It "appears to be a composite of numerous small finds made over three years of excavation (1871-3), possibly augmented by purchases. The treasure was 'found' at the end of the season and the end of the excavation. Schliemann needed to make a splash. Priam's treasure would make him famous. . . ."

Calder went on to cite the diagnosis of a certain Dr. Niederland, a "distinguished New York psychoanalyst, a Freudian theorist, and a specialist in the area of creativity." One of Schliemann's problems, it turns out, resulted from the fact that he was a "replacement child"; his parents gave him the name of an elder brother who had died in infancy. "Schliemann, in the psychoanalytical sense, was never certain that he was not himself the dead brother. Hence the compulsive need to do things and the morbid attraction to the dead, of which his interest in archaeology is only one example."

As if he were himself a little disquieted by this quaint example of Freudian science at work, Calder began his summing up with a tactful disclaimer. "I am not a psychoanalyst. I am an historian. I can show you that Schliemann lied and deceived, that he altered, suppressed and forged documents to make falsehood seem truth, that he bought objects and said that he had excavated them, that he fabricated a past that had never been, that he bribed and betrayed to gain his ends. I have never published a moral judgment on Schliemann. I have on his biographers. I consider them lazy and incompetent." Dr. Calder concludes with a diagnosis of Schliemann's condition much more alarming than that offered by Dr. Niederland. "Schliemann was ill, like an alcoholic, a child molester, or a dope-fiend. He did not know the difference between right and wrong."

Traill's contribution to the volume is a revealing re-examination, based on an unpublished correspondence, of the relationship between Schliemann and Frank Calvert, a member of a family of English expatriates prominent in the Dardanelles and the Troad all through the nineteenth century. Calvert was convinced that the mound at Hisarlik was the site of ancient Troy, even though scholarly opinion favored a site at Bunarbashi (where Schliemann dug and found nothing). Calvert had bought part of the mound and started to excavate; before giving up, mostly from lack of funds, he had uncovered relics of a Hellenistic temple of Athena and pottery dating back to the archaic age. It was Calvert who persuaded Schliemann, who had money to spare, to dig at Hisarlik on his property. It was agreed that they would share the finds.

The most spectacular object to emerge was a sculptured metope of the temple showing the sun god in his chariot. Obviously it could not be divided. Traill prints excerpts from the long correspondence which ensued, and it shows Schliemann in a very bad light. He offers to buy Calvert's share but bargains him down to accepting fifty pounds sterling, and when Calvert later learns from experts in Constantinople that the metope is worth ten to twelve times that amount and complains, Schliemann replies that he thought he had paid too much and that in any case, a deal is a deal. "*L'affaire faite est sacrée. . . .*" This is shabby treatment indeed for a man who had given him invaluable help during his excavations, and the shabbiness is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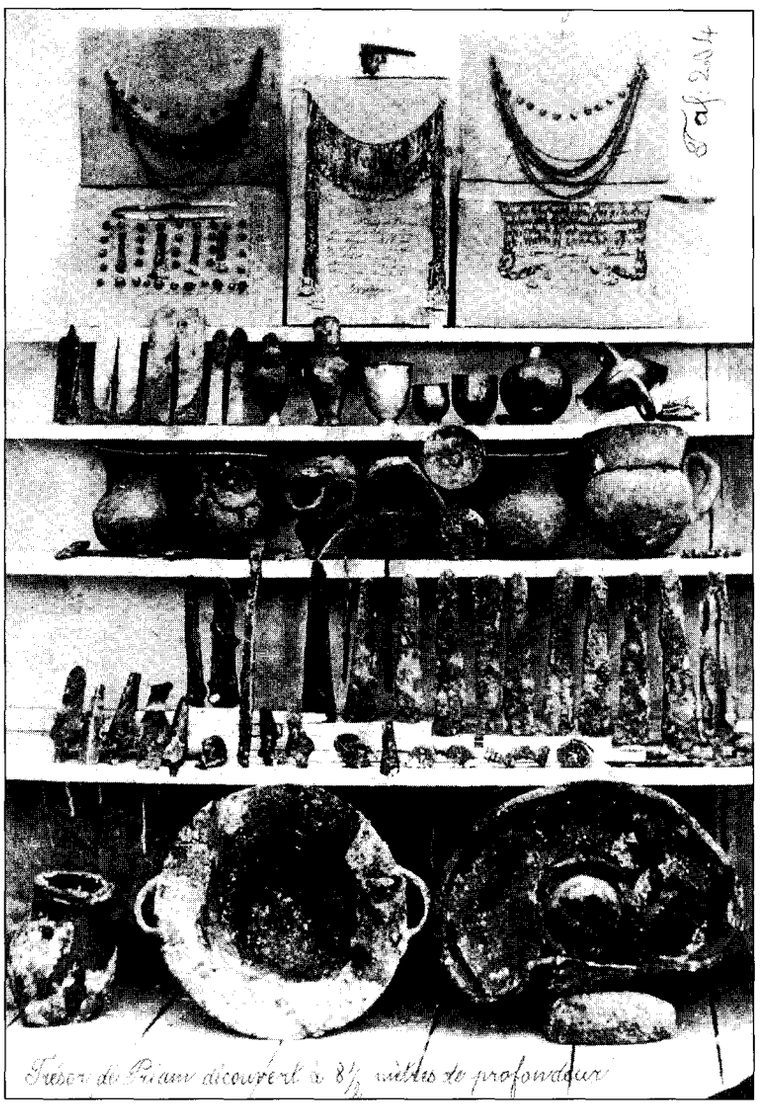
compounded by his later suppression of the fact that it was Calvert who convinced him that Hisarlik was the place to dig, claiming that Calvert "agreed with" his own "intuition."

Traill goes on, like Calder, to invoke a medical explanation for such conduct, citing from H. Cleckly's *Mask of Sanity* a list of symptoms that form the "most easily recognized basis for recognizing" the psychopath. They number sixteen, and among them are: Absence of Delusions, Superficial Charm and Good Intelligence, Absence of Nervousness or Psychoneurotic Manifestations, as well as Sexlife Impersonal, Trivial and Poorly Integrated, Failure to Follow a Life Plan, Poor Judgment and Failure to Learn from Experience, and Suicide Rarely Carried Out. All sixteen are discussed with an eye to Schliemann's case, some at length, but some succinctly, as for example, Suicide Rarely Carried Out, which is dismissed with the remark: "had Schliemann committed suicide this would have argued against the hypothesis that his personality was psychopathic, but he did not." Dr. Cleckly, in a letter to Traill about Schliemann, assures him: "It seems highly likely that he did indeed have many characteristics of the classic psychopath."

Still, whatever view one takes of these attempts to probe the depths of Schliemann's psyche, there can be no doubt that in business and in his private life he gave evidence of what Traill calls "a penchant for fraud." In 1852, when he was in Sacramento buying gold dust from miners, his business arrangement with his banker in San Francisco broke down "amid repeated charges that he was sending short-weight consignments of gold." In 1859, he was sued for fraud in his business transactions in St. Petersburg. In 1869, he obtained both his American citizenship and his divorce from his Russian wife by "bribing witnesses to sign sworn statements which he and they knew to be untrue." But his sharp practice as a businessman and his appropriation of other people's insights do not justify Calder's intemperate comparisons or Traill's resort to psychiatric diagnosis. All that is needed to explain Schliemann's character is his background.

He was a poor boy from a broken home who had to leave school at the age of 14 and work for seven years as apprentice to a grocer and who, without resources or connections, made a fortune in foreign countries that enabled him to retire from business as a wealthy man at the age of 34. Such a nearly miraculous transformation of station is rarely the result of the exercise of the Christian virtues of generosity and self-effacing modesty, and many of the great fortunes that have enabled men to leave their names revered by posterity as philanthropists or patrons of art were made by men who on their way to success did far worse things than Schliemann.

Traill's biography is critical, but he has tempered his accusatory tone and he resorts only rarely to psychiatric speculation. He has produced a life that renders all of its predecessors obsolete by exploiting to the full a wealth of new sources: the enormous Schliemann archive in the Gennadius Library at Athens, Schliemann's letters to his publisher, John Murray, in the firm's London office, documents preserved in the British Library, the Bodleian, the Mitchell Library at Glasgow and the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Berlin. The result is an engrossing account of an extraordinary life.



PRIAM'S TREASURE, 1871-73

Trojanische Alterthümer

After his seven years in the grocer's shop, Schliemann learned bookkeeping, but finding no suitable employment, he left Germany in 1841 on a ship bound for La Guayra in Colombia. The ship ran aground off the Dutch coast and he got a job in Amsterdam as an office boy in a large trading company. He learned Dutch, improved his English and French and in 1844 moved on to a position at one of Europe's trading houses. The firm did much business with Russia; Schliemann taught himself the language and in 1846 was sent to represent the firm in St. Petersburg, where he not only worked for the firm but also set up his own business in the indigo trade. After his trip to the United States and a profitable venture in the gold business he returned to St. Petersburg and opened a branch office in Moscow. During the Crimean War (1852-56), trading not only in indigo but also in saltpetre, he doubled his capital in a single year and soon turned from trade to a life of affluence and foreign travel maintained by successful investment in the Old and the New Worlds.

But why, if he was not fired by childhood dreams of excavating Troy, did he become the father of Bronze Age archaeology? Though he was a prodigious linguist—fluent in thirteen modern languages, including such exotic ones as Arabic, Turkish, Polish and Swedish—his study of Latin and ancient Greek dates from 1856, the year in which he first considered retiring from business. He had no university training;

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he had not even gone through the Gymnasium, the German high school in which the study of Latin, Greek and ancient history was routine. And when he finally set out on his travels in 1858—a Grand Tour through Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Egypt, Jerusalem, Petra, Syria, Smyrna, the Cyclades and Athens—the bulk of his time was spent in Egypt. A later voyage in 1864 took him to Tunis, Italy, Calcutta, Delhi, Singapore, Java, Saigon, China and Japan; it was the subject of his first book, *La Chine et le Japon.*

1866 found him in Paris, where he invested heavily in real estate and attended lectures at the Collège de France and the Sorbonne on, among other subjects, Greek philosophy and literature. Meanwhile, his marriage to a Russian woman had broken down; she refused absolutely to come to Paris with the children and live with him. Traill quotes a letter from Paris in which he gives her details of the glamorous cultural life that he was leading and finds in the letter "a touch of pathos. . . . He is clearly doing his best to make himself and his mode of life sound appealing." He goes on to surmise that Schliemann's "sudden interest in cultural self-improvement in 1856 was also intended to please her." And concludes: "If so, then the crucial conversion from merchant to archaeologist that was effected between 1856 and 1870 may have found its original impetus in the impossible task of pleasing a woman who despised him. It is in this tragic irony . . . that the real romance of Schliemann's life resides."

Once again, psychological speculations of this type seem superfluous. Schliemann was a highly intelligent man who could now afford to acquire the education that poverty had ruled out for him. An acquaintance with Latin and Greek was, for a nineteenth-century European, the distinguishing mark of a cultured man, and Schliemann's courses at the Sorbonne were his first steps toward acquiring it. One of the courses that he took was in archaeology, and in 1868 he became a member of the Society for American and Oriental Archaeology.

It was in 1867 and in Paris that the new discipline of archaeology was first given a place of honor in one of the European international exhibitions that celebrated progress in industry and the arts. The Exposition of that year featured French prehistoric materials as well as a rich display of archaeological treasure from Egypt. Archaeology was in fashion; and on his trip to Italy in the summer of 1868, Schliemann talked to the directors of excavations at Rome and Pompeii,

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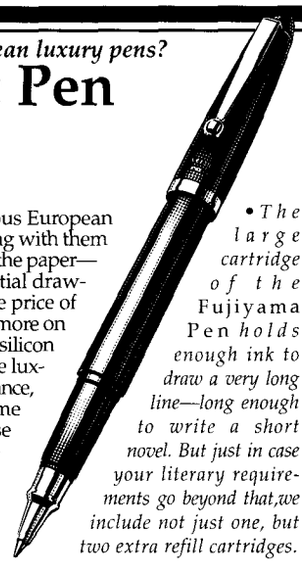

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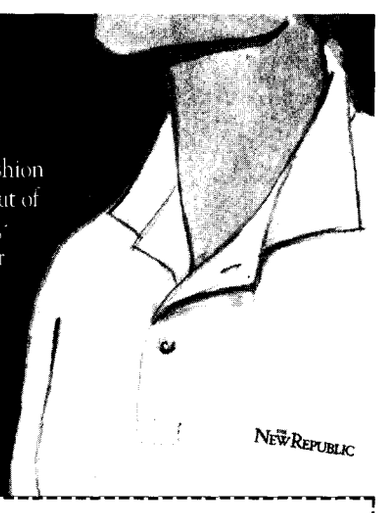

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where he spent three days. In July of that year he arrived at Ithaca, where, near the summit of the mountain that connects the two halves of the island, he inspected an area that had often been suggested as the site of Odysseus's palace. He thought he saw indications of the outline of a building, and before long he hired some workmen and started to dig. He found nothing of importance, but this was the first step toward the discovery of Troy and the even more spectacular excavation at Mycenae that revealed a Bronze Age civilization no modern scholar had ever dreamed of and that Greeks of the historical period knew only as the epic memory of a fabulous past, a world rich, as Homer says it was, in gold—*polychrysoio Mykenes.*

Traill's fascinating biography gives a full acount, enlivened by excerpts from diaries and correspondence, not only of Schliemann's spectacular career as an archaeologist but also of his private life—the divorce from his Russian wife and his marriage to a much younger Greek woman, Sophia, who appears wearing the gold of Troy in a famous photograph—and of his later activities as a lecturer, writer and controversialist in the turbulent world of Bronze Age archaeology. He finds much to admire, but he feels that Schliemann's mendacity and shiftiness in his business and private life justify doubt about the honesty of his archaeological practices and reports. He makes a strong case for believing that Priam's Treasure was not found all in one place and at one time, but contained objects discovered earlier that were held in reserve to form a spectacular discovery in the last days of the excavation.

Traill also suggests that something similar happened at Mycenae—that Schliemann added to the riches of the Shaft Graves pieces bought from workmen on the site who had smuggled them out, or objects found in clandestine excavations in the surrounding area financed by Schliemann. More serious still, he vaguely suggests the possibility of "modern forgeries." The only ground for such a suspicion is a letter Schliemann wrote in 1873 to his agent in Paris, which seems (twelve words in a crucial passage are "no longer legible") to be a request that he find a goldsmith who could make replicas of the gold objects found at Troy, presumably so that he could "pass off the faked duplicates to the Turkish authorities for their share." Nothing came of this, since Schliemann succeeded in smuggling everything out of Turkey, and much later, threatened with a lawsuit, settled the matter with a cash payment. This letter does suggest that Schliemann was capable of such tactics; and yet the creation by a Greek goldsmith of such an object as the gold mask known as the mask of Agamemnon, the one that has been under suspicion because it is strikingly different from the others, is a most implausible idea. Even Traill admits that though this mask differs from its companions in some particulars, these particulars are found on other undoubtedly Mycenaean objects, such as the famous Warrior Vase, also found at Mycenae.

Archaeologists have naturally reacted strongly not only against the intemperate language and the exaggerated claims of the earlier publication, but also to the more judicious but still skeptical attitude of Traill's biography. One authoritative historian and archaeologist, Anthony Snodgrass of Cambridge University, quoted in *The New York Times*, admitted that Traill "has proved beyond doubt that Schliemann ... was an unsavory character" but thinks that it does not matter very much. "Even when we catch him red-handed salting his discoveries" he says, "the intrusive objects mostly turn out to be of the right period [a point that Traill does not fully face]."

It is a point made also by another archaeologist, J. Lesley Fitton, a curator in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum, and a specialist on the Bronze Age. "With regard specifically to the Treasure of Priam," she writes in her new book, "we can now see that it cannot have been bought or faked—it is homogeneous in style, and generally right for the Early Bronze Age context in which it was found. It fits well with other material of Late Troy II date and, as Donald Easton has recently shown, came from an area between two successive fortifications, probably both of Troy II. Schliemann could not by chance have known this, and could certainly not have concocted a treasure which later research would so thoroughly vindicate." In her detailed account of the excavation at Mycenae, Fitton does not even mention the possibility of forgery. And on the subject of the fictions in the diaries, she points out that they were not written for publication and suggests that

> these fabrications perhaps show Schliemann trying his hand as a writer. Dissatisfied with his life, he clearly entertained the notion of becoming a travel writer before his ideas focused on the scholarly and archaeological world, and in fact his first published work was *La Chine et le Japon au temps present*, which appeared in 1867 and was based on his travel to those countries. We might also bear in mind that the relevant diary entries are in English, and that Schliemann, who tried always to write his diary in the language of the country he was visiting, advocated the writing of such descriptive passages as language exercises.

Fitton's book is an authoritative, well illustrated and highly readable history of Schliemann's pioneering excavations, the discoveries that followed them and those still under way, such as the "Greek Pompeii"—the Bronze Age town that is emerging from the volcanic ash at Akrotiri on the island of Thera and the Bronze Age ship and its cargo found off the Turkish coast at Ulu Burun in 1984. She deals with the spirited and sometimes rancorous controversies to which these discoveries have given rise and chronicles the development of new methods and attitudes in archaeology. But she also presents the reader with vivid portraits of the personalities and accomplishments of a series of individuals who, like Schliemann, devoted their lives to the search for that lost world which, before Schliemann's excavations, had been dismissed as myth and epic fantasy.

They are a fascinating crew. Arthur Evans, who succeeded in getting title to the land at Knossos that Schliemann coveted but failed to acquire, unearthed a huge palace complex that he identified as the palace of Minos, the Cretan king who, according to Greek legend, once ruled an Aegean empire and kept, in a labyrinth, a monster half-man, half-bull. But Evans did more than discover the labyrinthine palace. He also rebuilt and restored it. "Did Arthur Evans simply discover the world of Minoan Crete," Fitton asks, "or did he to some degree invent it?" Two photographs in the book—one of the "throne room" when excavated and the other the way it looks now—certainly justify that question, as does the fact that on one of the most famous Minoan frescos—*The Ladies in Blue*—"large areas, including all three heads, are restored." Evans's high-handed restorations raised eyebrows in archaeological circles, but his discoveries were indeed sensational. Like Schliemann, he revealed a new world, a previously unsuspected Aegean high civilization, centuries older than the one uncovered at Mycenae.

Later and elsewhere, two archaeologists—Alan Wace, an Englishman, and Carl Blegen, an American—extended and reinterpreted Schliemann's digs, Wace at Mycenae and Blegen at Troy. They collaborated on establishing a time sequence for the pottery of central and southern Greece and a scheme for mainland chronology that questioned Evans's assumption of the complete

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dependence, cultural and political, of Mycenae on Minoan Crete. The result was an acerbic controversy which lasted for decades and even resulted in the suspension of Wace's work at Mycenae and his replacement as Director of the British School in Athens. He was immediately appointed Lawrence Professor of Classical Archaeology at Cambridge, and lived to see his conclusions justified many years later as a result of an excavation made by Blegen.

In the spring of 1939, Blegen began work at a site on the west coast of mainland Greece and found the remains of a building that he identified as the palace of Nestor at Pylos. In it was an archive of tablets inscribed with Linear B, one of the two scripts, as yet undeciphered, that Evans had found at Knossos. In 1953, a young architect named Michael Ventris, who had worked on the script for years, published an article that not only offered a decipherment but also identified the language as an early form of Greek. Many experts disagreed at the time, but there is now general agreement that Ventris was right. The presence of Linear B at Knossos seemed to most scholars to suggest a scenario opposite to that favored by Evans—a period before the destruction of the palace when the Mycenaean Greeks ruled in Crete, a situation perhaps reflected in Homer's *Iliad*, where Prince Idomeneus of Knossos leads a squadron of eighty Cretan ships to swell the Achaean forces besieging Troy.

The issue is still a matter for argument, and new discoveries may change the picture. Yet it is remarkable that of the three sites that provide most of the evidence for the scholarly dispute, two, Troy and Mycenae, were opened up by Schliemann and the third, Knossos, would have been his crowning triumph if he had managed to get possession of the land. Whatever his faults as a businessman, colleague, partner, friend and husband, he was the pioneer, the man who confounded the experts and, convinced that with a spade he could find the palace of Priam at Troy and the grave of Agamemnon at Mycenae, started a new chapter in ancient history.

BERNARD KNOX is the author most recently of *Backing into the Future: The Classical Tradition and its Renewal* (W.W. Norton).

Flirting With Disaster

BY SEAN WILENTZ

Blood Sport: The President and His Adversaries by James B. Stewart

(Simon & Schuster, 479 pp., $25)

While he was working on *Blood Sport*, James Stewart had good reason to grow discouraged. In March 1994, Susan Thomases, Hillary Rodham Clinton's *consigliere*, invited him to write an impartial study of the Whitewater controversy, which he agreed to do. He conducted a ninety-minute interview with the First Lady, which was quite congenial. Then the Clintons abruptly shut him out. Stewart was left to deal with their lawyer, David Kendall. Robbed of his two most pertinent and most famous sources, Stewart had to rely on go-betweens, subalterns and Arkansas wheeler-dealers for much of his information. Still, he persevered.

"As I had told Mrs. Clinton," he writes, "I was drawn to the story as much for what it would say about our culture, values, and political processes as for what it would reveal about the president and his wife." His instinct was right: the troubling conclusions to be drawn from Whitewater—and there are troubling conclusions to be drawn—are not lawyerly conclusions. Yet the heart of the story, about the Clintons' alleged financial misdeeds in the 1970s and 1980s, turned out to be an author's nightmare: a turgid, bungled land investment along with a string of fast and loose (and legal) commodities deals, all of which Stewart would have to describe with tedious detail if his book was to have any credibility. Those details did not reward the painstaking journalist with any grand political or financial exposé, though they did add up to an unflattering portrait of the Clintons (especially Hillary) and the political culture in which they lived and prospered.

And so Stewart found himself having to make do with old stories and minor revelations about a long procession of ambitious, conniving and forlorn people (and one or two alleged harlots), high and low. Stewart's investigative talents are prodigious; but the book winds up confirming that the significance of the Whitewater matter has been exaggerated out of proportion to its actual importance. And finally *Blood Sport* makes you wonder about the limitations of investigative journalism. There were many things tacky and wrong in Governor Clinton's Arkansas, but they cannot be fully explained by a gumshoe. They demand cultural and psychological explanation. Legally, the "Clinton scandals" (as Stewart nicely calls them) may be thin, but novelistically they are thick. The Clintons are lucky that they live in a country without a Balzac.

Still, journalists friendly to the Clintons have risen to defend them against Stewart. Garry Wills, in *The New York Review of Books*, has hailed Stewart as "a thorough and honest reporter," but pronounced Stewart's account incomplete, and offered his own, condensed plot summary of Whitewater, making additional use of a report on the Rose Law Firm's involvement in the matter, prepared for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Wills has also chided Stewart for exercising insufficient skepticism toward the testimony of various anti-Clinton figures, including James and Susan McDougal, whom he describes as a couple of Al Capp characters. And yet Wills, who in his own reporting, as far back as the 1992 campaign, has been generally warm to the Clintons, especially to Mrs. Clinton, fails to find knockout evidence that would invalidate Stewart's narrative. His strong defense reads unwittingly like a weak prosecution.

More serious is what might be called counter-investigative reporting by Joe Conason, another writer friendly to the Clintons, which appeared in *The New York Observer*. According to Stewart, Hillary Clinton may well have committed at least one violation of federal law back in 1987, when, in filling out a routine income disclosure statement to a Little Rock bank, she improperly listed her and her husband's holdings in the Whitewater Development Company. Stewart did not receive the disclosure statement in question from the Clintons or from their lawyer (who claimed, Stewart says, that the statement did not exist), but he obtained a copy from records held by the House Banking Committee. And he hedges a bit in his conclusion about the document's significance.

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"Curiously," he notes, "Whitewater is not mentioned by name as an asset;" and he continues that "if the assets [listed on the form] are meant to describe [the Clintons'] interest in Whitewater," then their value seems to have been "grossly inflated." Stewart was less cautious, however, in the promotion of *Blood Sport*, when he highlighted the 1987 disclosure form, dropped the qualifications that appear in the book, spoke portentously about the Clintons' failure "to abide by financial requirements in obtaining mortgage loans," and hinted that this failure signaled a larger pattern of deceit on the Clintons' part.

Compared to the lurid Clintonian plots that have been conjured up by the president's most feverish adversaries, this was an infinitesimally small potato; but Stewart held it high. Conason has learned, however, through undisclosed channels, that Stewart came into possession only of the first page of what was actually a two-page disclosure statement. He was given what seems to have been the only page that the House Banking Committee's files contained. (This first page, which Stewart reproduces in an appendix, does include this sentence: "BOTH SIDES OF THIS STATEMENT MUST BE COMPLETE.") Yet on the second, reverse-side page of the original statement, a copy of which I have myself seen, there is, as plain as day, and in Hillary Clinton's handwriting, the information that Stewart suggested that she had falsified. Whitewater is mentioned by name.

The sleuth, it seems, slipped up. I am inclined to regard Stewart's error about the 1987 disclosure statement as an honest error; and it could have been avoided completely had the Clintons' lawyer supplied the relevant documentation to Stewart. Stewart might be fairly chastised for failing to assume that the Banking Committee's documentation was incomplete, and for then failing to hedge his remarks in the book even further; and television, of course, thrives on exaggeration. But this does not mean that Stewart was driven by a desire to "get" the Clintons, or by any other extra-journalistic impulse. Conason's discovery notwithstanding, *Blood Sport* should not be dismissed as sloppy and fallacious.

For Stewart offers the most comprehensive account yet of the disorders that afflicted the Clinton administration in its first three years. He has performed a great service not only in collecting facts, but also in structuring them. He has provided what the discussion of the Whitewater morass badly needs: coherence. A shrewd and lucid stylist, Stewart makes connections among events that came to public notice in bafflingly random ways, including the ghastly story of Vincent Foster's descent into suicidal depression, which Stewart handles with uncommon sensitivity.

BILL AND HILLARY CLINTON BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Portions of the book, particularly the portions that explicate the Whitewater deal, are, to be sure, stupefyingly dull. Even Stewart's ability to breathe life into legal and financial records is defeated by these margin calls and these loan documentation waivers. It is easy to lose track of various characters and institutions; and unless you have more than an elementary understanding of the real estate and commodities markets, there is bound to be confusion about what, exactly, is transpiring at any given point in the story. Consider the following passage:

> In April 1987, Susan McDougal's first payment of interest on the Hale HBA loan came due. She didn't have the money. She wrote Hale, "Because of the fluctuation between media expenses and reimbursement, it will be 30 to 60 days before I can make this payment to you." No payment materialized then, either. Finally, Susan assigned Hale her shares in Madison Guaranty as additional security for the loan. They were all but worthless, and in any event, had already been assigned by her and Jim to Worthen Bank. Ultimately Susan failed to make any payment of either interest or principal on the $300,000 loan, and Hale finally filed suit against her. He also considered joining a suit against Frost & Co., Madison's accountants, blaming them for Susan's default. He discovered Frost was already being sued by the FSLIC, in a case soon to be taken over by the Rose firm.

Or the following:

> For a project that was yielding no profit, Whitewater was a constant headache. In the fall of 1987, Hilman Logan, the buyer of Lot 13, the site of the Hillary house, defaulted on his payments after filing bankruptcy. Those payments were servicing the Clintons' loan from Security Bank of Paragould, and Hillary had to find a way to keep that loan from being called. Chris Wade found another buyer. Hillary bought the lot back from Logan's bankruptcy estate for $8,000, then resold it to Wade's client for about $24,000.

This passage concludes with an asterisk, which is amplified at the bottom of the page, in italics: *"It seems remarkable that the lot was sold for $8,000 when the fair market value was obviously much higher."* And then the story continues:

> Hillary was eager to use the proceeds to dispose of the troublesome debt she and Bill had taken on at Security Bank of Paragould to buy the house in the first place. As recently as April 4, 1988, Marlin Jackson had written Hillary, enclosing a past-due notice on their note asking for accrued interest of $665 and either the principal or an extension agreement. Despite being a

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close friend and political ally of the governor (though he had now resigned as state banking commissioner), Jackson proved more of a stickler than had 1st Ozark. "Time is of the essence," he wrote. "By statute the Security Bank must have an examination that begins prior to the end of this month." [There is a statutory provision for state banks to be examined no less frequently than once each twenty-four month period.]

"If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call me.... "

Presumably, Hillary complied; a check for the interest dated April 11 was received by the bank.

This is prose with all the power and the charm of a flow chart. Those who deeply love Bill Clinton or Hillary Clinton or deeply hate them will slog through these bits easily enough. The rest of us, however, need some other reason to keep all of the particulars straight, a mark, perhaps, of the increasingly esoteric nature of contemporary political scandal.

The citizenry needs to know about the people who live in the White House, as revealed in the record of their actions before they moved in and since. But what if those revelations and that record are maddeningly arcane? Sometimes the stakes are high enough, the principles and the policies fundamental enough, to inspire the necessary effort. The Iran-Contra affair was just as labyrinthine as Whitewater; but it seemed to be the story of nothing less than a constitutional crisis. Nothing of the kind is at stake in Whitewater. For this reason, the attention of Stewart's reader inevitably flags.

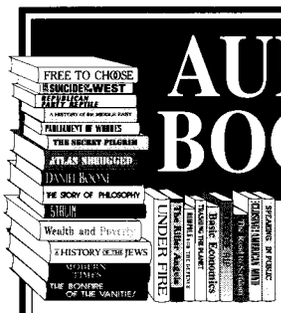
And yet the reader should press on. The character of the president and his wife is a legitimate matter of national interest. The problem is not Stewart's book, the problem is its genre. Since the assassination of John F. Kennedy, and with a vengeance since Watergate, investigative reporting has become a chief method, perhaps the chief method, of covering the president. An entire generation of White House reporters has learned its trade prowling the back corridors of Washington, assuming the worst and thirsting for "-gates." (We have paid a high price for this journalistic culture in the work of Oliver Stone.)

The press's vigilance is certainly justified: presidents lie. A lot. And whenever grievous crimes or delinquencies of national importance have been the case, the factual reporting that exposed them has been necessary and in keeping with our political system. In the case of Whitewater, however, the factual reporting may be necessary, but after a while you begin to feel that the real story is slipping through all the numbers and all the names. This may be one of those cases in which God is *not* in the details.

Stewart, who is smart enough to have realized this, made the sound decision to render most of his story dramatically. He has been criticized for this. By recreating situations and conversations dating back a decade and more (so the argument goes), Stewart has violated the canons of journalism. Yet recollections of old events and direct quotations, backed up with corroborative materials, are not necessarily out of bounds for the writing of what Theodore Draper calls "contemporary history." Academic historians of our times, especially those who use oral history materials, rely on such recollections all the time. And in the case of "the Clinton scandals," a dramatic rendering is completely apposite. For finally these are tales of human machinations, disappointments and misapprehensions.

The most memorable parts of *Blood Sport* are its distinct, almost self-contained subplots, of which the most affecting is the Vince Foster story. Stewart strips away the innuendoes, the rumors and the lies that have led some responsible writers (including William Safire) to doubt that Foster committed suicide and others (including the Reverend Jerry Falwell) to suggest that the White House had a hand in murdering Foster, in order to keep him from divulging some dark secret about Whitewater. Stewart's Foster is a competent, reserved and proud man who was utterly ill-suited to the Washington rough-and-tumble, especially the rough-and-tumble inside the early Clinton White House. It is a fine portrait, drawn with decency. Stewart cannot say exactly why Foster shot himself, though it is clear that Foster's overreaction to the coverage of the shake-up at the White House travel office was a factor. (The triviality of the occasion makes the man's death more saddening, not less.) Yet Stewart does show that Foster was in deep emotional trouble in the summer of 1993; and he shows how Foster's death, far from being a suspicious, out-of-the-blue event, was the desperate act of a troubled soul.

The story of the sensationalization of Foster's death is another of Stewart's best sections. Scurrility in journalism is nothing new; but until now a sitting American president has never been publicly accused of complicity in murder—the murder, in this instance, of a top aide who had also been one of his boyhood friends. For this all-time low in political propaganda, we have to thank the mephitic atmosphere created by an informal confederacy of well-heeled right-wing conspiracy freaks, who have special-



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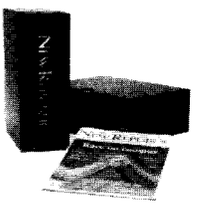

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ized in the "mainstreaming" of paranoia. Stewart leaves a few stones unturned in his investigation of these unscrupulous people; he might have lingered longer over the role of Richard Mellon Scaife, the Pittsburgh millionaire, in the funding of this disgusting campaign. But he does show how such malignant nonsense got picked up, twisted and made newsworthy enough to appear on the networks and in the national press.

The central story features the two main characters, and it is essentially the story of a preposterously ambitious couple. They were groomed for greatness at some of the best schools in the world, but they chose a path to glory that led through Arkansas, the husband's home state. And so the tale of these brilliant, smooth, imperfectly idealistic, thoroughly networked boomers in a hurry devolves into a series of *scènes de la vie provinciale*, the embarrassing scenes of quick profit-taking, financial mismanagement, quotidian political tawdriness and whispers of sexual infidelity that they later tried to hide from public view.

When, years hence, writers come to retell this story, they would be well-advised to cut back on the financial arcana and bear down on the delicious details in Stewart's book that place Whitewater in its cultural milieu—not the comic-strip hillbilly world of the stereotypes, but the very real Arkansas yuppiedom and would-be yuppiedom of the 1970s and 1980s. There are the endless accoutrements (con-man's tics, really) of the manic depressive James McDougal, from his Savile Row suits to his faked Scottish aristocratic genealogy. There is the almost comic clash of styles of the two female partners in the Whitewater Development Company: McDougal's energetic child-bride Susan, "the lady in the hot pants" pitching real estate on television, and the young litigator Hillary Rodham Clinton, the Illinois emigrée and governor's wife, dealing with financial finaglers in her thick, businesslike spectacles. There are piquant '80s touches such as the microbrewery that McDougal planned to build in a dry Arkansas county. (The plan eventually required the services of Hillary Clinton's law firm, much to her later chagrin.) And of course there is the future president, obsessed with politics and policy, an eager gladhander, darting about Little Rock in his jogging shorts, looking for opportunities.

The retelling should also sharpen Stewart's character studies of the Clintons. In the course of the Whitewater follies, Hillary Rodham Clinton comes across as tough, sardonic, defensive and fast on her feet, remorselessly trying to cope with her conflicting desires. She wished to make some easy money in order to support her cash-poor household without looking like a Reagan-era freebooter (which in a petty way she was); to keep smiling in public while enduring the pre-feminist coarseness of Arkansas politics; to stick with what was, by all accounts (including her own and her husband's), a troubled marriage, while raising their daughter and keeping track, as best she could, of the family finances.

When her masks slips, she occasionally resorts to lying, sometimes risibly (as in her claim that she had earned $100,000 on a $1,000 investment simply by reading *The Wall Street Journal*). She is imperious, a creature of power, wary of being ill-served by those upon whom she de-

The Wind and the Rain

You wonder if you'd recognize them now,
the girls in elementary school, Glynnis,
for example, tall with glasses, who
brought in a cardboard sheet and bicycle lamp
to demonstrate the after-image, the mind
fooling itself, seeing what is no longer
there; or Christine who brought the local Icini
queen to life, Boudicca of the flaming hair
and scything Raleigh wheels. She
could outrun and outjump all us boys,
which later helped me understand how
Atalanta could beat out Melanion,
and why he had to cheat.
And then the gorgeous Rhoda, all of ten,
who crawled around the classroom floor,
pretending to pick up the stuff
she'd dropped, but really looking up
the boys' gray shorts to taunt us
in the recess. All were afraid of her,
and some in love. "*I* know what the doctor did,"
she sang when Dr. Broda (recently joined
in holy matrimony with Dr. Fuchs, the
famous atom spy) had cupped our small
embarrassed balls and ordered us to cough.
Later, Rhoda's father, Brin, a Welshman
quick on the birch, was my Headmaster at
the Cambs. High School for Boys. In church,
he sat behind me in the choir, keeping us
boy sopranos all in line, enemy of whispers,
Malvolio to our gum and fidgets. And then,
one day, father, mother, brother, Rhoda,
all left for Australia, and that was that.
Until, years later, when I too had left
the sinking ship, I opened up a paper to
Profumo's trial. "Please state your name,"
the judge intoned. "Rhoda Newton-John."
"And state your occupation." "Whore, m'lud."
And that was that. More years go by. I turn
on the TV. And there she is, years shed
like skin, but sweeter, blander, singing
some soft song, all changed, her name
changed too: Olivia.

When that I was but a little tiny boy,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain;
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day.

BRIAN SWANN

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pends. (It was her single-mindedness, according to Stewart, that caused her to hold on to her and her husband's Whitewater shares, even when McDougal offered to relieve her of them; and her nononsense, ready-for-prime-time attitude after she entered the White House did nothing to improve Vincent Foster's state of mind.) Her strongest proclivity is toward concealment, even when concealment is self-defeating. She is almost definitionally certain of her own rightness.

He, by contrast, is not the coper, but the one who must be coped with. "I was born at sixteen and I'll always feel sixteen," he once told a reporter. "And Hillary was born at age forty." His direct involvement in the money of Whitewater is not large: he has little or no lust for cash, not much of a head for figures, and no compunction about putting his wife in charge of their joint legal and financial affairs. But he is not unappetitive. Not by a long shot. It is his impulsive side, his lip-biting seductiveness, his imprudence bordering on recklessness, that compound his and his wife's difficulties. It was the young Clinton, after all, who first got them mixed up in the Whitewater deal, based on nothing more than the assurances of his political associate, good ol' Jim McDougal. He seems to have been a highly imperfect judge of other people's imperfections. His characteristic response to trouble is to pick up the phone or drop by—to smooth things over, to make a deal, to charm the danger away. Eventually, of course, he begins to look devious.

The American public seems to have forgiven Clinton the Whitewater affair. Why this is so is not clear. Perhaps the story is too complicated. Perhaps the evidence is too unconvincing. Perhaps the ascendancy of Newt Gingrich has concentrated people's minds. That the scandal has turned into a bore (except for the hardy bands of Clinton-lovers and Clinton-haters) may mark a significant step in our political history. After Watergate, Americans (and especially the press) came to demand an assurance of virtue in their leaders. Democrats in particular made a fetish of nominating presidential candidates with stolidness or pretensions to sainthood. Bill Clinton broke that mold. He could not hide all of his flaws, and yet they didn't do him in. He is neither a liberal nor a conservative; he is a maneuverer and a manipulator who would like to contribute to the public good. Maybe the country needs a president with the soul of a pol, to fend off the true believers at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

If this is so, then the Clintons' friends may be making a mistake by getting riled up about *Blood Sport*. In their support of the president, and particularly in their support of his wife, you hear echoes of the old perfectionism, of the old protestations to rectitude, of the old defensiveness, that is precisely what got the Clintons into this mess. The important point is just the opposite. Bill Clinton may be the man who taught the American people to think about character realistically. To be sure, he taught by example; but the lesson is a valuable one. The really significant shortcomings that are made plain in James Stewart's book are not legal, they are human. This is the sort of evidence that deserves to be placed not before a jury, or a special investigator, or a Senate committee, but before the citizenry, along with everything else about the president and his adversaries. As it will be placed, in November. •

Spin, Memory

BY STANISLAW BARANCZAK

Highcastle: A Remembrance by Stanislaw Lem translated from the Polish by Michael Kandel

(Harcourt, Brace, 146 pp., $22)

A renowned science fiction writer who all of a sudden publishes a book subtitled *A Remembrance* is like your local Delphic oracle announcing its conversion into a branch of the Genealogical Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. You hate it when such a thing happens. There's nothing wrong in searching for one's roots, but you somehow don't expect it from people who specialize in prophecy. Imagination, not memory, is supposed to be their field. If they are so good at foreseeing all the troubles that the universe has in store, why are they wasting their valuable time delving into things infinitely less momentous on account of their being, first, personal, and second, gone?

One of the many charms of Stanislaw Lem's *Highcastle* is that it is simultaneously an engaging little memoir and an engaging little treatise on the impossibility of writing memoirs; but it is hard for the reader to get over the fact that this is the last book we would have expected from this writer. The muted tone of surprise could have already been detected in the critical voices welcoming, halfheartedly, the original Polish edition in 1966. It had something slightly upsetting about it even then and there. I suspect that it will retain this quality in the eyes of its American readers thirty years later.

Here, after all, is a memoir of a famous person that does not portray the famous person's father as a molester of children. In America, this is a major flaw indeed. It may be annoying when an old-fashioned "remembrance" of a writer's childhood comes along in which the writer's father is a goodhearted, mild-mannered, somewhat absentminded *paterfamilias*, whose only exercise in stern parental authority is the confiscation of the pistol that his teenage son obtained from a schoolmate and put to use in the family's apartment in order to check the weapon's penetrating force against the living-room door. That hardly qualifies as child abuse.

In Poland, in 1966, the slightly upsetting effect of *Highcastle* was of a different nature. Lem was already an established writer, with fifteen books published over as many years. He had a large and enthusiastic audience in Poland, and, thanks to numerous translations, a growing international reputation. Yet "established" somehow never captured the nature of this tireless experimenter's position in literary life. As we look back at the fifteen books published prior to *Highcastle*, one impression is still as striking now as it was then: philosophical consistency diversified by thematic, generic and stylistic variety.

It looked as if Lem was becoming more and more entrenched in his vision of the human (and the humanoid) condition even as he was growing more and more playfully experimental. There was *The Astronauts*, his orthodox novelistic debut of 1951, which, were it not that its action took place aboard a spacecraft rather than in a coalmine, a collective farm or a locomotive factory,

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would not differ very much from the classic Socialist-Realist "novel of production"—and there was his wildly subversive or, in the political lingo of its time, "revisionist" *Dialogues*, published just six years later. There was the relatively straightfaced science fiction of *Eden* (1959) and, for all its ironic complexities, *Solaris* (1961)—and there was the farcical, no-holds-barred hilarity of *The Star Diaries* (1957). There was *The Cyberiad* (1965), with its references to the models of the fable, the fairy tale, or the mock-heroic epic—and there was *Memoirs Found in a Bathtub* (1961), which owed much to Kafka's or Orwell's dystopias. And there was even a realistic contemporary novel in three volumes, *The Time Not Lost* (1955), and a metaphysical whodunit, *The Investigation* (1959), and a collection of erudite and profound essays, *Summa Technologiae* (1964).

It might seem as if Lem's versatility had prepared his readers for any surprise. In real life, however, a writer's public image is never a fair impression of all of his or her books. Not unlike the stars of Hollywood, immutably cast in their generic roles of the Voluptuous Blonde or the Strong Silent Type, the makers of literature may also find themselves forced to trade their individual complexity and their painstaking evolution for a simplified and unchangeable trademark, so that they may be noticed and recognized at all. And the best of them spend a good part of their lives trying futilely to discard the trademark and to complicate the picture.

There may be no better example of this than the history of the reception of the work of Stanislaw Lem. I wonder what feats are still necessary for this author finally to shake off his trademark as a "science fiction writer." In this regard, he is a twentieth-century version of Chekhov, trying all his life to make his readers forget the erstwhile existence of the cheap humorist Antosha Chekhonte. Having became famous as the only European science fiction writer worth reading, Lem keeps trying to make us see that he is worth reading, all right, but also for reasons that have precious little to do with spaceships, robots and extraterrestrials. Is it not enough that over the past thirty years he has published, if my reckoning is correct, more non-science fiction, mock-science fiction or anti-science fiction than science fiction? That he has written a couple of bulky theoretical or critical books (*Philosophy of Chance*, 1968; *Phantasy and Futurology*, 1970) devoted to debunking the myth of science fiction's cognitive value? That he has proven on countless occasions to be a writer who explores the fundamental unchangeability of human nature rather than heralding the arrival of a technology-boosted New Man or New Civilization? All this has not been enough, apparently. And so apart from its other merits—it is a highly interesting reflection on childhood and memory as well as a very funny book—*Highcastle* can also be read as an early expression of Lem's attempt to wriggle out of the limitations imposed on him by the demons of classification.

But the picture is even more complicated. Science fiction had a particular significance in Lem's historical setting. There were many readers who tended to view his whole business of science fiction as a literary subterfuge. And so, by 1966, he had earned wide recognition not just as the leading writer of science fiction but also as the leading writer (or second perhaps only to Slawomir Mrozek) of political satire. After more than twenty years of People's Poland, the eye of Lem's average Polish reader was well trained in reading between the lines. Lem's *The Star Diaries*, to cite but one delightful example, was eagerly read and understood as what it was: an exercise in anti-totalitarian dystopia, differing from *Animal Farm* only in that its protagonist was a spacecraft pilot and the action took place on distant planets. And he beat Orwell hands down in hilarity.

The widespread adoption of this view of Lem was the chief reason why *Highcastle* left behind a feeling of thwarted expectation. From its very first pages, the book leaves little doubt that, at least in its plot and its setting, it has nothing in common with science fiction. But neither did *Highcastle* have anything in common with between-the-lines anti-regime mockery. It was, obviously enough, not another *Solaris*; but it was not another story from *The Star Diaries* either.

There were some clues, false clues, that suggested the possibility of a politically subversive, Aesopian reading. The most appealing suggestion of this sort, for many readers, was to read *Highcastle* as a realistic book on the Polish city of Lwów. By the mid-'60s, Polish fiction was increasingly preoccupied with the Eastern Territories lost by Poland to the Soviet Union in the wake of the Second World War. Despite censorship, the books on this theme managed to achieve remarkable popularity; novels set in the formerly Polish cities of Lwów/Lviv/Lvov/Lemberg and Wilno/Vilnius/Vilna could always count on a large following. And some of them were pretty good novels, too.

Nostalgia for the lost paradise of one's childhood has been one of the major forces behind the literary imagination of all times and places, but it gives your creativity a double jolt in situations where your expulsion from the Garden is not only symbolic but also quite literal; when your return to Paradise is rendered impossible not just by the God-decreed irreversibility of time but also by the man-decreed untraversability of a state frontier. Barred from re-entering the city of their youth even as tourists, the former inhabitants of Lwów might have devoured *Highcastle* for its evocative, nostalgia-nutrient value. For readers like them, this book was, first and foremost, the memoir (one which saw the light of day most probably thanks to the censor's oversight) of a fellow exile who used to walk down the same streets, smell the same coffee from the same cafés, laugh at the jokes of the same radio comedians, and purchase his beloved halvah at the same streetstand.

Since it so happened that this particular memoirist was blessed with exceptional descriptive skills, Lem's fellow ex-Lembergians formed certainly the least disappointed part of *Highcastle*'s readership. Even they, though, must have experienced some growing doubts as they turned the pages. Was it really, as the subtitle suggested, a "remembrance," a work, then, done by Memory rather than Imagination? Was it a legitimate "book on Polish Lwów"? Did the book's title refer to the actual High Castle, a monument of architecture towering over the city, or was "Highcastle" supposed to stand for something else, in its capacity as a metaphor or, God forbid, a symbol, as in Kafka's *The Castle*?

Misleadingly enough, Lem's narrative begins very much like a traditional autobiography. All the circumstances of his life as a child and a teenager in Lwów seem, to someone who bothers to verify them against the entry LEM, STANISLAW (1921-) in some literary Who's Who, to correspond closely to reality. He was born in Lwów, into the family of a fairly prosperous laryngologist, his parents did live where he tells us they did, he did attend the schools that he describes. The initial impression of non-fictional authenticity will greatly decrease in further chapters; but for a while, at least, Lem's way of sticking to actual events, authentic places and specific material objects is refreshing. (As befits a good novelist, he is a proven master of synecdoche, perfectly able to draw an indirect yet lively portrayal of his father by describing a few

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of his possessions—his laryngologist's mirror, his book cabinet, his private collection of the most bizarre foreign bodies found in his patients' throats.)

Even more refreshing is the unassuming, self-ironic honesty that never permits Lem to stoop to doing what memoirs of childhood mostly do nowadays: complaining of how unbearable the writer's early life was and blaming anybody but himself for that. Quite the contrary. He freely admits his lack of any feeling of guilt for having had a generally happy childhood. And he writes: "Norbert Wiener begins his autobiography with the words: 'I was a child prodigy.' What I would have to say is 'I was a monster'." The aforementioned episode with the pistol was just one among many spectacular misdeeds committed by him during his early period of relentless destruction:

> It is striking that I have little memory of playmates yet had so much feeling for various objects. . . . Could this have been because objects submitted to me completely, whereas living beings had a will of their own, a will that went too much against mine? Because everything that surrounded me, whether of metal or wood, became my plunder, my prey. I waited a long time, years, for the death of our gramophone, or at least for it to grow old, but finally my patience ran out and I opened it up. . . . [O]nly the objects were honest with me, were completely open, hiding nothing: those that were at my mercy I destroyed, as well as those that I had no power over.

For Lem the schoolboy, however, wreaking such havoc is by no means tantamount to admitting chaos into his life. The opposite was the case. He appears to have been born a rationalist, believing in some underlying order in all things and leaning always on the instinctively adopted Leibnizian principle (not that he had read philosophy yet) that all things real are rational. Accordingly, he destroys his toys not just for the primitive pleasure of destruction but also to see how they are built and what makes them work—to discover their hidden Reason. He soon outgrows rationalism and enters his second phase, by jumping to the opposite philosophical extreme: instead of reason and order, he is now fascinated by irrational chance; instead of taking apart everything that has the misfortune to fall into his hands, he now prefers to build things on his own. Like the things that he destroyed, the things that he created do not work or, if they do work, they do not serve any practical purpose.

And finally the third phase of the restless child's spiritual development, the phase begun during his high school years, is marked by yet another sudden shift in his obsessions. Rather than destroying things to get to the order that governs their existence, and rather than lending his hand to the workings of chance by creating objects with no practical use, he now attempts to impose his own order upon chance. A half-fantastic chapter, written in a rich and hyperbolic style slightly reminiscent of Bruno Schulz, describes the concrete shape that this idea took on. It was the secret production—during high school classes and making use of all sorts of available material ("small sheets of paper from a notebook, . . . bristol, drawing paper, . . . high-quality cardboard cut from the covers of class exercise books, . . . ink, India ink, colored pencils, and coins pressed as stamps in the appropriate places")—of identity papers.

> What kind of identity papers were these? All kinds—conferring authority over a certain territory, with limitations, and documents of empowerment, and titles, and licenses and warrants, and on the longer pages I hand-printed various checks and payable-to-bearer certificates for kilograms of ore, usually platinum and gold, and vouchers for precious gems. I made passports for emperors and monarchs, assigned to them dignitaries, chancellors, each of whom could produce papers at a moment's notice, and I fashioned meticulous coats of arms and produced special passes with validations and authorizations, and since I had plenty of time, this legitimizing seemed to have no end. . . .
>
> I was building a kingdom of universal permission, universal power, but . . . [f]ollowing my bureaucratic instincts, I rightly mistrusted transcendent ideas, sticking to the system of centimeters-grams-seconds, that is, I always specified in respectable units of measurement what the bearer could do.

As we read Lem's book with an eye on the changing proportion between the true and the fictitious, the straightforwardly autobiographical and the metaphorically imaginative, these passages clearly represent the latter. Lem eventually returns to a more subdued and businesslike memoiristic narrative, to focus again on real-life events of the last years before the outbreak of the war, but it is too late: it is already evident that what we have been reading cannot be contained within the "remembrance," or memoir, or autobiography. *Highcastle* is, rather, a practical test of the cognitive powers of a writer, and of the limitations of the literary imagination, that mysterious power which enables him to "build a kingdom of universal permission" and at the same time to keep all the "bearers" of his permits and passes under strictest control, always specifying "in respectable units of measurement" what they are empowered to do.

We have every reason to believe that Lem undertook this narrative recreation of his personal past—trying "to entrust the task to my memory, giving it free rein and following it obediently"—for no other reason than to tell us what his childhood looked like. He succeeded in that, too; but on his way he happened to discover the essentially imaginative nature of memory. One more thwarted expectation: just as we reconciled ourselves to the fact that a leading expert in imagination has put his reputation at stake by trying to explore the realm of memory, it turns out that he was really at work annexing memory to imagination.

STANISLAW BARANCZAK and Clare Cavanaugh's translation of *View with a Grain of Sand: Selected Poems* by Wislawa Szymborska was recently published by Harcourt, Brace.

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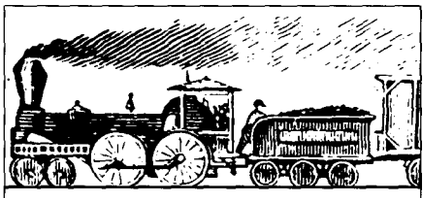

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

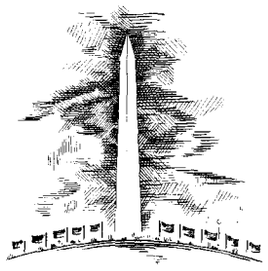
The beauty myth

THIRTY YEARS AGO, MY MOTHER was crowned National Watermelon Queen. It was, and as far as I know it still is, a genuine beauty pageant, with a rhinestone tiara and even an engraved silver tea service for the winner. (When my parents' house was robbed, the tea set was left behind—too hard to fence, we figured.) She spent the summer handing out watermelon samples to supermarket shoppers throughout America. Tony Bennett sang "Happy Birthday" to her, and she shared a bill with hot young thing Candice Bergen on a New York City TV talkshow. This was not her first beauty contest triumph, just the biggest. In fact, my mother had quite a successful career as a beauty queen from Rosebud, Texas. This seems funny now. Not because my mother wasn't beautiful—she still is—but because she's so thoroughly sensible. And, anyway, she hates watermelon. The pageant racket was just a bit of fun for an honor student who was betting her future on her brains.

THOUGH I LOOK LIKE MY FATHER, I like to think that I at least inherited a little of my mother's good sense. I'd never thought of following in her glam footsteps—until a few weeks ago. I was browsing in a local bookstore where people go to be seen (yes, in Washington, the most notorious pickup spot is a bookstore), wearing notice-me lipstick. And someone did. "Excuse me," a woman said, "you have a very expressive face." I stared back inexpressively. She explained that she was a talent scout for a local modeling agency and, in rapid-fire patter, told me to call the agency, to ask for her boss, to ask lots of questions. Then she handed me her card and disappeared. It was that "expressive" that gulled me. Only later did I realize: almost everybody has an expressive face. The only people with perpetually inexpressive faces are ... models.

TWO DAYS LATER I FOUND MYSELF in a tired suburban office suite. The lobby was full of glossy black-and-white photos of "Cindee" and "Lindzay" and "Jimmy Mel." I read an informative brochure that said, "We like to think of ourselves as the largest talent agency on the East Coast between New York and Miami." Well why not? Illusion is their business. And, besides, I was propelled by a fantasy of my own. After an hour of waiting, a vice president ushered me into her office. "How long have you wanted to be a model?" she asked. The thought had never crossed my mind, I answered truthfully. I was there because I thought it would be an adventure. "You mean you've never, ever wanted to model?" she demanded, hostile and incredulous. Well, I said, maybe when I was 12 years old. This seemed to satisfy her.

IT'S THE TASK OF MODELING agents to see every face or body as a potential display object and to assume that the person inside every body assents. And it's a broader cultural habit, as well, as the now-famous Gulliver Preparatory School girls' cross country team learned. The team was disqualified after winning third place in a state competition because a representative of the Florida High School Activities Association thought that their snug shorts were too revealing. "Bun-huggers"—that's, delightfully, the technical term—look like modestly cut bathing-suit bottoms, more Annette Funicello than Victoria's Secret. Athletes wear them because they're more comfortable than bunchy jogging shorts, and, though there is an undeniable aesthetic factor, it's not a particularly erotic one—a woman or girl wearing them looks like a serious and fierce competitor. The Floridian arbiters of fashion didn't see it that way. But what *did* they see? Was it a matter of protecting the girls or protecting others (the boys?) from them? When it comes to the female body, it seems, context is nothing.



MODELING IS CLEARLY MUCH SIMpler. It's explicitly about desire. So my would-be agent instructed me. Desire, she said, is a vital element in a modeling career. "Do you think you have the desire to become a model?" I had already answered the question when filling out an agency form; but she repeated it and repeated it, using it like an elaborate aural punctuation mark. Would I bleach my teeth—desire—would I cap them—desire? Did I intend to cut my hair—desire—what was its natural color—desire? The emphasis on desire made perfect sense, because models are specialists in both sides of wanting. So this question, however oppressive, was entirely reasonable. But some of her other questions were creepy. Had I been alone or with a friend when approached by the talent scout? Who had I told about my appointment? Did they seem supportive? Did I have a support group? What was my best friend's name? Where did she work? And then, again, did I have the desire? I got nervous. Was this an agency or a cult? The price of vanity was getting a little high. The tension lifted when she asked if I would like a soda. Yes, thanks. "Okay. Do you have fifty cents?"

AND THAT WAS THE DIFFERENCE between my endeavor and my mother's. Low-level beauty contests are, or at least were, sweet summertime rituals for all the girls next door, more a confirmation of one's status in town than a way to overcome or escape it. Low-rent modeling, on the other hand, is based on desperation and fantasy, extraordinary promises and extreme tactics. And no small infusion of cash. The "investment" in my future as a model began with a $395 deposit, "to make sure you won't quit," and about $1,200 for a lengthy modeling course. Thinking she had closed the deal, the vice president urged me downstairs for a photo shoot and screen test. But I demurred. I couldn't leave the deposit today, I said, and anyway I wanted to think it over. "You just said that you had the desire to do this!" That word again, this time menacingly. "So your main reason for doing this wouldn't be desire, would it? It would be something else, because you had thought about it." As if a thinking model were bad news. And, in a last appeal, she observed that "in this business things move very quickly." I moved very quickly to the door.

I WAITED AT AN AMOCO STATION three blocks away for a taxi to rescue me, rattled by my misbegotten adventure, cursing myself for blithely giving the agency my home address and Social Security number. People stared. A woman whose "expressive face" is frozen between a scowl and a pout, wearing an electric-pink dress and heels (and that damned notice-me lipstick) is not often found skulking between the unleaded pump and the motor oil display. I hated people for noticing me. I didn't want to model, I wanted to disappear. Later, safe at home, it occurred to me that concupiscence comes in many forms and that a trip to the suburbs for a confrontation with the quease-inducing consequences of vanity wouldn't hurt many of the citizens of Washington. Then I realized that I was being gullible again. Given the opportunity, the worst of them would smile, revealing already-bleached and capped teeth, and say, "Where do I sign?" For all its stuffy nebbishness, this is, in a way, also the capital of desire.

JENNIFER BRADLEY

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

National (not Federal) Standards

The education summit held in March gave a big boost to the idea that we need to raise standards of student achievement. Business leaders and governors talked about what is expected of youngsters in other countries and agreed that it is unacceptable for U.S. students to lag behind. But there was a gap in the discussions.

With all the talk about raising standards, the subject of national standards—a set of common expectations for all our students—hardly came up. This is no surprise. In the recent congressional elections, conservative groups made clear their hostility toward programs with the label *national* or (even worse) *federal*, so governors might have feared the political consequences of aligning themselves with national standards. Nevertheless, there are a number of reasons that working toward a set of national (not federal) standards makes much better sense than settling for 50 (or 15,000) state or local ones. Diane Ravitch lays out some of the arguments in "50 Ways to Teach Them Grammar" (*Washington Post*, April 11, 1996).

Should children in Alabama learn a different kind of math from children in New York?

First, as Ravitch notes, the idea that we can't have national standards and curriculums because every state, and indeed locality, wants to create its own is bunk. We already have a national curriculum—but it is set by textbook publishers, and its standards are very low. That is one of the reasons that student achievement is also very low.

And even if states and localities now want to create their own standards and curriculums, how can we justify 50 (or 15,000) different ones? We are one nation. Is an understanding of the Constitution or the way to write a decent paragraph more important for students in some communities than in others? Should children in Alabama learn a different kind of math or science from children in New York? One reason that students in other industrialized nations excel is because they do not have to put up with fragmented curriculums. As Ravitch points out,

> Mathematics and science work according to the same principles regardless of the city, state or nation. The airplane that just flew over my house doesn't care what country it is in; it works the same way in Austria, Nigeria, and Japan as it does in the United States. Students in my neighborhood need to know exactly the same mathematics and science that are taught in the best schools in other cities, states, and nations.

This does not mean that national standards must lead to a single and invariable curriculum—the kind that tells you that if it's March 12, seventh graders must be studying the Dred Scott Decision. It would be a great mistake to ignore regional and local history and literature and culture, and there is no need to do that. In fact, we'd probably want to devote only 50 to 70 percent of the time to items in the national curriculum, leaving the rest to state and local option. Ravitch says the curriculum might look like "concentric circles":

> One ring will be the skills and ideas that everyone in the nation (and the world) needs to know; another ring will be peculiar to the state (reflecting its history, geography, and regional concerns); and the third will be local. This ensures enough uniformity so that children have equal opportunity to learn what their peers are learning elsewhere.

Is it practical for us to consider national standards? Some people take the spectacular failure of the original U.S. and world history standards—and the recent fizzle of the English standards—as proof that national standards can't be done here. But we should not be surprised that we didn't get these standards right the first time. And we should be encouraged by the way the criticism of the history standards led to a national debate about what our students should be learning—and to a much-improved version of the standards.

The biggest stumbling block to national standards is the fear that they will lead, somewhere down the road, to federal control. But, as Ravitch says, if the standards are proposed by independent bodies, which has been the plan all along, and reviewed and monitored by a mechanism that the governors create, there is no possibility for interference by the federal government.

The governors and business leaders who met at the education summit took a big step forward when they embraced the idea of high standards. They can't stop there. Having 50 or 15,000 different curriculums or, even worse, a different curriculum in every school, is not going to lead to high standards. Indeed, most will be low. And in a country with a highly mobile population, the existence of many different curriculums will mean educational chaos. There is no successful educational system anywhere in the world where standards are left to local control. Where they are not national, they are closely coordinated. We ignore other countries' experience at our peril.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker.

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